

# NESTED IDENTIFICATION IN COMMUNITY ENTERPRISES

Exploring the dynamics of temporal nested identification processes  
among volunteers in the Finnish community enterprise Livonsaari

Master's Thesis  
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Creative Sustainability  
Spring 2019



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**Title of thesis** Nested Identification in Community Enterprises: Exploring the dynamics of temporal nested identification processes among volunteers in the Finnish community enterprise Livonsaari

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**Degree** Master of Science

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**Degree programme** Creative Sustainability

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**Thesis advisor(s)** Prof. Ewald Kibler

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**Year of approval** 2019

**Number of pages** 89

**Language** English

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### **Abstract**

One hot topic in the sustainable development debate is the call for alternative business models, focusing not only on financial but also on social and environmental values. A widely underappreciated and underexplored organizational form in this debate is community entrepreneurship. As academics suggest that volunteerism is a crucial element for the existence of community enterprises, this study delves into the organizational structures of community-based enterprises with a particular focus on identification dynamics of volunteers within a community setting. Thus, based on the concept of nested identities, the following intensive single case study, which was conducted in a community-based enterprise (CBE) in the Naantali municipality in Southern Finland, sheds light on identification processes of volunteers and how they, over the course of a seven months program, identify with other individuals, workgroup relationships and the community within a given organizational setting.

Our study follows the principles of an ethnographic research design and builds generalizable theory for the two phenomena community enterprising and volunteerism. As an inductive-abductive approach was used for the data analysis procedure, this study furthermore provides empirical validity and contributes to existing theories on temporal nested identification processes.

Through our research study, we have generated three key theoretical insights on temporal nested identification processes. First, the identification process appears to be negatively affected when an organizational setting does not enable individuals to pursue their motives within a given timeframe. Second, the workgroup target seems to play an integral role in the process, which we found to be tightly connected to the temporality of the volunteer program. Last, our findings suggest that a continuously strong identification with the organizational target appears to have a positive effect on other identification targets over time. Additionally, our findings give reason to suspect that external factors that occur during a timely limited program shape identification dynamics. While events and interactions spur identification in the short-run, the accumulation and mismanagement of tensions appears to impinge on processes in the long-run.

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**Keywords** community enterprise, sustainable development, temporality, nested identification processes, organizational identification, volunteerism

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# **I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS**

This master's thesis project has been long, yet invaluable journey during my time at Aalto University. This learning experience would not have been possible without the support of many individuals who accompanied me along this journey. To all of them, I am thankful for their willingness to share their time with me.

First and foremost, I would like to thank the Livonsaari community for granting me access to the community setting, letting me in in their homes and enabling research in the underexplored field of community enterprising. Particularly, I would also like to thank the five volunteers for genuinely opening their doors to me, allowing me to be part of their unique Livonsaari experience and sharing thoughts, laughter and tears with me. You made this experience in Livonsaari more than a research project and I would like to dearly thank you for that.

Furthermore, I would like to express my great appreciation for my thesis supervisor Prof. Ewald Kibler who led me through this research project with genuine support, academic guidance and continuous motivation. I would further like to express a big thank you to the Livonsaari research team, namely Lauri J. Laine and Steffen Farny, who provided academic support and helped to steer the focus of this thesis in the most meaningful direction.

Without the unconditional support of my family, I would not be where I am today and there are no words that describe my gratitude towards every single one of you. Particularly, I would like to thank Mama and Papa, you gave me roots to grow and wings to fly, I will always be grateful for your genuine love. I would also like to thank Dr. Brigitte Szeliess-Stock for constant advice and words of encouragement. You taught me the meaning of wisdom.

Last, I would like to express my sincere appreciation for all those individuals, teams and professors who I had the pleasure of encountering during the time of my graduate program in Creative Sustainability at Aalto University. By sharing your very personal approaches and perspectives on how to advocate for a more sustainable future, every single one of you is an endless source of inspiration for me.

# TABLE OF CONTENTS

I. ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	ii
II. LIST OF FIGURES .....	v
III. LIST OF IMAGES.....	vi
1. INTRODUCTION .....	1
2. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	5
2.1. Community-Based Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development.....	6
2.2. Integrated Theoretical Approach on Nested Identification Processes .....	11
2.3. Objective of our Research.....	16
3. RESEARCH CONTEXT .....	17
4. METHODOLOGY .....	20
4.1. Research Philosophy, Design and Case Framing .....	21
4.2. Research Ethics.....	23
4.3. Methods and Data Collection .....	24
4.4. Reflexivity .....	27
5. DATA ANALYSIS.....	28
5.1. Identifying Common Phases of the EVS Journeys.....	30
5.2. Identifying Different Sense-Making Levels.....	31
5.3. Identifying Similarities and Differences in the Sense-Making Process.....	32
5.4. Abstracting the Experiences .....	33
5.5. Identifying Common Pattern in the Identification Process .....	34
6. FINDINGS .....	36
6.1. The Dutiful Pattern .....	36
6.2. The Commanding Pattern.....	42
6.3. The Caregiving Pattern .....	50

7. DISCUSSION: THREE KEY THEORETICAL INSIGHTS FROM CROSS PATTERN EXAMINATION .....	58
7.1. Connection between Individual Motives and Organizational Setting .....	62
7.2. Importance of the Workgroup Target .....	64
7.3. The Organization as Instant Institutionalized Reality.....	66
8. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH.....	68
8.1. Temporal Nested Identification Processes in Community Enterprises.....	68
8.2. Revisiting the Work of Ashforth et al. (2011).....	72
8.3. Revisiting the Framework of Cooper & Thatcher (2010).....	73
8.4. Volunteer Engagement in Community Enterprises .....	74
9. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK.....	79
10. CONCLUDING REMARKS .....	81
11. REFERENCES .....	84
IV. APPENDIX .....	vii
A. Photo Collages of my Six Visits in Livonsaari.....	vii
B. Workshop Results – October 2018.....	xiii
C. Example – Data Analysis Step 3.....	xv
D. Example – Data Analysis Step 4.....	xvii
E. The Original Framework of Cooper & Thatcher (2010).....	xix
F. Description of the Rumo Excursion as Driver for Identification.....	xix

## II. LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1 - Model of Community Participation according to Chanan & West (1999) .....	9
Figure 2 - Construction of Nested Identities according to Ashforth et al. (2011).....	13
Figure 3 - Overview of the Data Collection .....	25
Figure 4 - Overview of Data Analysis Procedure.....	29
Figure 5 - Analysis Step 1: Identification of common phases of the EVS journeys .....	30
Figure 6 - Analysis Step 2: Identification of Sense-Making Levels.....	32
Figure 7 - Analysis Step 3: Similarities and Differences in the Sense-Making Process .....	33
Figure 8 - Analysis Step 4: Correlation between identification targets .....	34
Figure 9 - Analysis Step 5: Overview of the Three Derived Identification Patterns.....	35
Figure 10 - Identification Dynamics of the Dutiful Pattern .....	36
Figure 11 - Identification Dynamics of the Commanding Pattern .....	43
Figure 12 - Identification Dynamics of the Caregiving Pattern .....	51
Figure 13 - Overview of 3 Major Insights after Cross Pattern Examination .....	62
Figure 14 - The Core Identification of the Duty-Fulfiller .....	69
Figure 15 - The Core Identification of the Commanders .....	70
Figure 16 - The Core Identification of the Caregivers.....	71
Figure 17 - Identification Dynamics of EVS according Cooper & Thatcher (2010) .....	73
Figure 18 – Example of Analysis Step 4: Overview Identification Assessment.....	xvii
Figure 19 - Individual Identificaiton Paths .....	xviii
Figure 20 - EVS Group Identification Paths .....	xviii
Figure 21 - Livonsaari Identification Paths.....	xix
Figure 22 - Original Framework of Cooper & Thatcher (2010) .....	xix

### III. LIST OF IMAGES

Image 1 - Lunch Break at Mika's House & Dinner in front of Alitalo. Date: 16.05.2018...	38
Image 2 - EVS in the Greenhouse of the Cooperative Garden. Date: 21.05.2018.....	45
Image 3 - Snapshots from Free Time Activities. Date: May 2018 & September 2018.....	46
Image 4 - EVS Toilet Construction. Date: 26.10.2019.....	50
Image 5 - Camp Fire Scene during #1's Graduation Party. Date: 19.05.2018.....	54
Image 6 - Collage of my 1. Livonsaari Visit .....	vii
Image 7 - Collage of my 2. Livonsaari Visit .....	viii
Image 8 - Collage of my 3. Livonsaari Visit .....	ix
Image 9 - Collage of my 4. Livonsaari Visit .....	x
Image 10 - Collage of my 5. Livonsaari Visit .....	xi
Image 11 - Collage of my 6. Livonsaari Visit .....	xii

# 1. INTRODUCTION

The 21<sup>st</sup> century constitutes fundamental changes that disrupt existing societal structures, altering consumption and demand, bringing along challenges, as well as opportunities. The advancement of technology requires not only businesses to balance the impact of automation and artificial intelligence with the existing workforce, but also confronts governments and individuals to adapt to the new rules of the game. Changing demographics shifts economic opportunities to other parts of the world and increasing urbanization demands new, innovative approaches to allow cities to grow sustainably (Bansal, 2019; Ernst & Young, 2016; Salmivaara, 2017). Globally, societies are exposed to challenges regarding these disruptive changes. Salmivaara (2017) argues that those challenges implore us to rethink the responsibilities of public and private sectors as well as to evaluate what role entrepreneurial solutions can play to address these challenges.

There are fair reasons that speak for rethinking current practices. In recent years, the capitalistic economic system has conveyed several negative long-term consequences. From an environmental perspective, effects of maximizing growth are expressed, for example, in the framework of planetary boundaries, which emphasizes the threat of human influence on our planet. This influence becomes evident in, for example, the loss of biodiversity, changing climates and chemical pollution (Steffen et al., 2015). From a societal perspective, the results of unsustainable business practices have also become increasingly visible. Today, we are exposed to confrontations in health related issues like increasing numbers of mental diseases, social isolation (Srivastava, 2009) or changing labor markets influenced by rapid technological change and shifting demographics, for example (World Economic Forum, 2018).

Bansal (2019) states that the academic research field of sustainable development hold the potential to spark new, innovative ideas on how to address these societal disruptions. The sustainable development debate is particularly relevant for the economic contexts as striving for growth in our current system is not sustainable (Bansal, 2019; Farny, 2016; Salmivaara, 2017). While industrial development has generated wealth and prosperity, current business activities breach planetary boundaries.



According to the definition of the Brundtland Report (1987), sustainable development “meets the needs of today without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs” (Bansal, 2019; Farny, 2016; Salmivaara, 2017; United Nations - World Commission on Environment and Development, 1987). This definition is still accurate and Bansal (2019) frames sustainable development as aspiration for “intra- and inter-generational equity”. Accordingly, sustainable development has become more urgent and critical than ever (Bansal, 2019).

In the economic context, sustainable development can be addressed through entrepreneurship practices. A common perception of the purpose of entrepreneurial business activities is to increase value for shareholders (Bansal, 2019; Penrose, 1959; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). Welter et al. (2017) challenge the assumption that only a certain kind of entrepreneurship can lead to prosperity and employment opportunities. They encourage expanding the view on entrepreneurship to a “broader context of reasons, purposes and values” (Bansal, 2019; Farny, 2016; Salmivaara, 2017). This view is supported by the increasing interest in sustainable entrepreneurship and pro-social venturing (Farny, 2016; Farny, Kibler, Hai, & Landoni, 2018). Instead of focusing solely on financial values creation, sustainable entrepreneurship encompasses the principle of the *Triple Bottom Line* framework (Slaper & Hall, 2011) by adding an emphasis on social and environmental value creation (Salmivaara, 2017).

Under the umbrella of sustainable entrepreneurship, the role of community enterprising is discussed to hold potential as alternative organizational structures to address sustainable development. In her doctoral dissertation on *The Legitimacy of Entrepreneurship in Sustainable Development Debates*, Salmivaara (2017) proposes community-led initiatives in disadvantaged areas as viable alternatives to traditional, state-led development programs. To add to that, the combination of sustainable development and entrepreneurial activities are often associated with the alleviation of poverty in the developing context. Particularly, among marginal and deprived communities, which are isolated from mainstream economy, community-based entrepreneurship (CBE) is seen as vital tool to spur social uplift (Linna, 2015; Parwez, 2017). According to Peredo & Chrisman (2006), community-based solutions emerged from initiatives for environmental conservation and provision of livelihoods among

marginalized populations in Latin America, Asia, Africa, and poor rural areas of industrialized countries.

In marginalized areas, community-led initiatives are seen to hold vast potential for poverty alleviation. Despite the fact that scholarly interest in pro-social forms of entrepreneurship has immensely increased in recent years (Farny, 2016; Farny et al., 2018; Garner & Garner, 2011; Shepherd, 2015), in the industrialized context, the role of community remains largely underexplored as form of social enterprises to shape new social realities.

In times of crisis and instability, the community has always been the safety net for individuals. Harari (2011) states that back in the 18th century, a person that was separated from his or her community had few chances of survival. Especially in the industrialized world, the state has taken over the role of the social safety net and consequently made the dependency on communal structures obsolete (Harari, 2011). As industrial and technological developments have outdated communal structures in the past, there are other factors that have the capacity to transform social structures intentionally or unintentionally (Daskalaki, Hjorth, & Mair, 2015).

Social transformation deals with the mobilization of alternatives to reassemble and uncover new social realities. Daskalaki et al. (2015) state that social change has already become visible in new organizational forms and local initiatives which shape the social environment. One visible response to societal changes is a notions that groups, individuals and collectives demonstrate increased engagement towards altering work dynamics, public and private processes and interaction with others in society (Daskalaki et al., 2015). The authors, for example, pose the question about a comeback of the public sphere and other community organizations.

While the implications of CBE are often connected with less-developed economies, Peredo & Chrisman (2006) state that the concept of community enterprising may possibly encourage new and fruitful ideas for the entrepreneurship debate in industrialized economies. In the face of a new social reality, we would like to steer academic attention towards the concept of community enterprising and its potential for the sustainable development debate. According to Garner and Garner (2011), social enterprises depend on volunteers to give time and effort without financially benefitting from the work (see also Farny et al., 2018). Despite

this dependency, we know surprisingly little about the impact of volunteerism on community entrepreneurship. By following the call of experts in the field of entrepreneurship, with this study we would like to spark a discussion on the role of community-based entrepreneurship as alternative business practice for sustainable development.

Accordingly, this study serves three main purposes: first, we aim to contribute to a richer picture of the conceptual framework of community-based entrepreneurship. Second, by taking the volunteer lens, we focus particularly on the relationship between the community (as form of pro-social enterprise) and volunteers (as temporal assets for the community). Third, we examine the identification dynamics of the two previously stated phenomena and discuss the role of temporal nested identification processes for community-based enterprises. Through an intensive single case study, we examine the structures of the community-based enterprise Livonsaari in the industrialized context of Northern Europe, precisely Finland.

The objective of this study is to offer a better understanding of dynamics of the identification processes within CBEs and it attempts to propose factors that help explaining those processes. We do so by first, providing an overview of existing literature on the interlinkage of sustainable development and community entrepreneurship. Afterwards, we provide information on the integrated theoretical framework of this study, which includes background on nested identities, organizational identification and temporality. Following the theory, we examine the relevant research context for this study and give detailed insights in the methodological grounding. After examining the data analysis procedure, we present our findings and discuss their implications for research.

Consequently, based on the concept of nested identities, the following study sheds light on how volunteers, over the course of a seven months program, identify with other individuals, workgroup relationships and the organization within a given setting (in this case the CBE Livonsaari). Our research aims to answer the question how the identification with one specific target (e.g. workgroup) influences the identification with other targets (e.g. organization or individuals) over time.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The Silicon Valley model of entrepreneurship is often seen as the ultimate goal for entrepreneurs as it promises high-growth, job-creation and empowers change to the way we live in exciting ways (Welter et al., 2017). Often, we tend to forget, that those “unicorns” represent only a small fraction of the overall field of entrepreneurship and thus we ignore the bulk of broad variety of everyday-entrepreneurs. Welter et al. (2017) challenge the assumption that only a certain kind of entrepreneurship can lead to prosperity and employment opportunities. They encourage expansion of the view on entrepreneurship to a “*broader context of reasons, purposes and values*” and with that they do not stand alone: the call for alternative, pro-social, more environmentally-aware forms of entrepreneurship is growing (Daskalaki et al., 2015; Farny, 2016; Salmivaara, 2017).

In a traditional view, Penrose (1959) describes entrepreneurs as exclusively interested in profit and thus, they differentiate themselves from those, who have other prospects than financial aspirations (Dana & Light, 2011). Following the proposal of Welter et al. (2017), there are several reasons why we need to explore alternative forms of entrepreneurship. One of them is the pressing need for sustainable development at the age of disruption. Due to its timely and timeless nature, entrepreneurship and entrepreneurial responses are seen as means to address major societal challenges (Shepherd, 2015). However, in order to provide suitable responses also in the future, Shepherd (2015) provokes experts in the field to not fall in the competency trap, using traditional theories which might lead to short-term rewards, but rather demonstrate “*willingness to accept considerable novelty in questioning, theorizing, and testing to generate new and interesting insights*” (Shepherd, 2015). Similarly, an increasing number of scholars in the field encourage overcoming the trap but constituting to entrepreneurship studies which require continuous and dynamic development (Daskalaki et al., 2015; Welter et al., 2017).

One branch of this development is the growing role of collective and community action on entrepreneurship. Daskalaki et al. (2015) propose theories about how social transformation can be related to community action and social entrepreneurship. Furthermore, the authors discuss how this relationship affects the new social reality. One example of their theory development is the transformational force of collaborative entrepreneurial activities to create a more community-oriented citizenship. The influential power of social entrepreneurship

underlines its importance for shaping the new social reality and thus can be considered a crucial part of the sustainable development debate.

## **2.1. Community-Based Entrepreneurship and Sustainable Development**

The relevance of entrepreneurship for society has already been discussed in the 60's by Fredrik Barth (1963). Based on this understanding, entrepreneurship and its related activism sparks and is sparked by social dynamics (Daskalaki et al., 2015). Daskalaki et al. (2015) state that these social dynamics fall short of organizational structures (e.g. financial, human and/or information resources). To fully utilize the capacity for social impact of entrepreneurship, it is necessary to establish organizational constructs. Accordingly, social entrepreneurship builds on collective capacity with the aim to establish organizations in order to increase benefits for citizens. Those organizations are considered social enterprises.

Social enterprises follow the purpose of creating social well-being by addressing a social challenge in their business models. While operations are profitable (or at least should be), the main aim of social enterprises is not to generate financial, but rather social benefits. According to SITRA, the Finnish Innovation Fund, the characteristics of a social enterprise include (1) business activities solve social problems and (2) more than half of the profits are reinvested in the company (SITRA, 2018).

As previously stated, one form of sustainable entrepreneurship is community enterprising. There are various opinions about the definition of community entrepreneurship. From a macroeconomic perspective, community enterprising can be positioned in the third sector, falling neither in the public, nor the private sector (see: Defourny & Nyssens, 2010; Nyssens, 2006; Somerville & McElwee, 2011). According to the theoretical exploration of Somerville and McElwee (2011), the authors differentiate between community enterprising and community-based enterprises (CBE). Somerville and McElwee (2011) explain that there is a variety of conceptualizations of community enterprises, where CBEs are only one form among many. Other forms of community enterprises are, for example, non-profit organizations or co-operatives. A community enterprise involves the community as social base in some way, which can be either in terms of ownership (members of the enterprise), in terms of objectives (social benefit), or both.

In the context of marginalized communities, communal entrepreneurial activities are seen as tool to generate value on a local level and thus have a comparative advantage over absolute

market-oriented activities (Parwez, 2017). While many programs to tackle poverty alleviation degenerated into global “charity” (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006), community-based initiatives organically involve the community and its member in entrepreneurial activities (Salmivaara, 2017). When integrated holistically and adapted to the local requirements, Peredo & Chrisman (2006) propose CBEs as important means to alleviate people from poverty as this approach is seen to build local and durable self-reliance (Linna, 2015; Peredo & Chrisman, 2006).

With their work *Situating community enterprise: A theoretical exploration*, Somerville & McElwee (2011) provide insights on community enterprises from an industrialized perspective, drawing from two cases in England. In their theoretical exploration, Somerville & McElwee (2011) point out that the interest in community enterprise stems from two roots: first, there is a rising societal importance of enterprises associated with post-industrialism and the search for alternative ways of doing business. Second, a turn towards community becomes visible in the public sector (Somerville & McElwee, 2011). The following paragraphs elaborate on current understanding and definitions of CBEs in more detail.

Scholarly definitions on CBEs vary, depending on the degree of community engagement and participation among its members. Some scholars focus on the commercial nature of CBEs when providing a definition. For example, Welsch (2004) explains that experts in community development view the potential in entrepreneurial activities as a remedy in economically distressed areas. In a broader sense, Daskalaki et al. (2015) view CBEs as an option to mobilize civil society to revive capitalistic economic activities.

The comparative study of Soviana (2014) allows for a glimpse in the various notions and definitions of community-based enterprises. While there are several common characteristics that determine a CBE as such (e.g. communal benefits, multiplicity of goals, ambitions and interests, ownership structures etc.), we still know little about how much of those characteristics are actually realized in practice.

Other authors highlight the collective manner of CBEs regarding management and ownership (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006; Soviana, 2014). This leads in several cases to the discussion about decision-making processes in CBEs. There is little agreement whether the concept of CBE is based on the principles of “*by the people*”, “*on behalf of the people*” or whether both forms are valid for defining a CBE. In a definition provided by Peredo and

Chrisman (2006), the authors state that a Community-Based Enterprise is a community that acts “*corporately as both entrepreneur and enterprise in pursuit of the common good*” (p. 17). This definition implies that a CBE has full ownership of business activities with the objective to generate social benefit (“*by the people for the people*”). For this study, we use the definition of Peredo and Chrisman (2006), which states that in a CBE, the community acts both as entrepreneur and enterprise striving for the common good. This definition highlights the interaction of community members and activities within the community.

While there are various opinions about the definition of a CBE, the range of implementing the concept is equally diverse. The following section provides a brief overview of examples of existing CBEs and how the concept has been researched in previous literature, exemplifies the diversity of CBE under the umbrella of sustainable entrepreneurship.

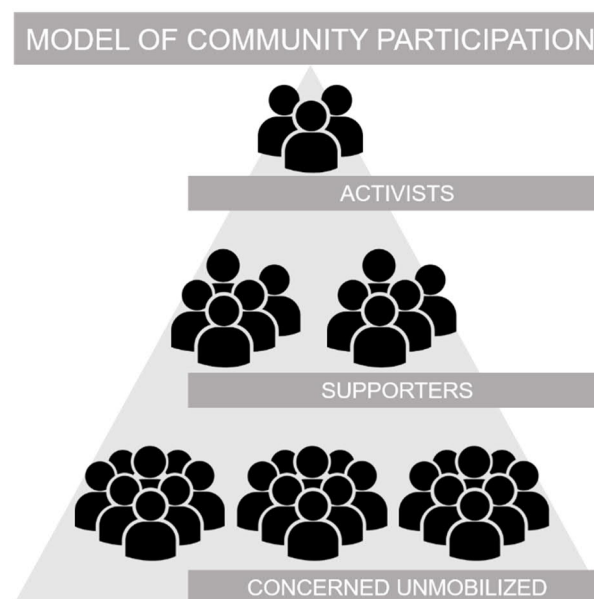
CBEs can be described as heterogeneous entities that differ in their contextual situation, performance and organizational architecture (Soviana, 2014). Generally, CBEs can improve conditions on various levels, fostering social, economic and environmental well-being. In her comparative case study, Soviana (2014) identifies that despite sustainable performance, CBEs are fragile systems and often experience influence from outsiders (non-community members).

Rather than simply focusing solely on the community, its members and their benefits, Soviana (2014) suggests that the organizational architecture of CBEs should move towards a system’s view that includes internal structures, as well as the influence of outsiders. Due to the high degree of diversity among existing CBEs, the author suggests tailoring and shaping the partnerships between communities and their influencing forces to the specific situation in accordance with the respective needs (Soviana 2014). This cooperation can benefit organizations and CBEs through extended network and increased innovative potential for problem solving. A particularly positive impact of those partnerships is the creation of social learning platforms, which enable the members to learn in multiple ways, for example, through action, interaction and experiences of others. Daskalaki et al. (2015) also emphasize the importance of gaining a better view on learning that takes place within and through community-based initiatives.

Organizational structure, performance measurement and networking activities are extremely important for the understanding of the concept for community-based entrepreneurship,

especially with regard to social and economic long-term sustainability. The field of community participation sheds more insight into the field of social science including social interaction. However, it is not less relevant to understanding the nature of CBEs. The dynamics of community participation require understanding, as they build the foundation for organizational structure, performance and learning that results from a CBE. An interdependency can be found in the relationship of participation and organizational structure. In her study, Soviana (2014) concludes that although community participation is not the most important success factor to support long-term sustainable development of a CBE, it is crucial to tailor the relationships to other organizations that fit the CBE (Soviana 2014).

In a model of community participation, Chanan & West (1999) provide an overview of how the general dynamics in a community can be depicted (Gilchrist, 2000; Somerville & McElwee, 2011). An amended version of the model is provide below in *Figure 1*. Although the model is shaped in the form of a pyramid, the intention is not to display a hierarchy but rather to present the steadily reducing number of participating members (Somerville & McElwee, 2011). Accordingly, there are smaller numbers of community members actively driving entrepreneurial activities. With their activism, they shape the business activities in the community more than other members do and thus influence the development of the community they live in.



*Figure 1 - Model of Community Participation according to Chanan & West (1999)*



This perception of community participation is also in line with the findings of Soviana (2014), where the author states that a certain group of people, leaders or selected members are usually in charge of strategic decision making, whereas other community members are involved in the field work, pursuing operational tasks.

In the context of educational entities, CBEs are seen as potential concept as they can facilitate the learning of entrepreneurial skills. Vorley and Williams (2015) conducted a participatory case study about community-based learning. They suggest that entrepreneurial skills can be acquired through experience and are relevant for modern education systems. The authors express that fostering a more active community of practice can develop a sense of ownership among stakeholders. With their research, the authors highlight not only the importance of community in times of social transformation, but also exemplify the rich and diverse nature of social entrepreneurship.

From our excursion into existing literature, we can conclude that the concept of community-based entrepreneurship is a possible and viable approach to shape a new social reality. CBEs are not only relevant for approaching social challenges in the developing context, but have also potential for areas that experience structural changes, regardless of their state of development (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). In regards to sustainable development, community-based entrepreneurship is seen to have the potential to empower disadvantaged communities through collective involvement (Salmivaara, 2017).

After we have examined various facets of community enterprises, including member engagement and purposes for existence, we now turn to an integral part for the upkeep of CBEs: the role of volunteers in the community-driven organizations. Organizations that are not primarily profit-oriented, often depend on volunteers as additional workforce (Garner & Garner, 2011). As CBEs usually operate for the benefit of its members and thus prioritize social and environmental over financial value, they usually fall into the non-profit category.

Volunteerism describes people who give time and effort to a cause without gaining a financial profit from their work. Traditionally, volunteers are associated with non-profit organizations to generate social value (Farny et al., 2018; Garner & Garner, 2011). Consequently, volunteer management can be considered an integral part of many non-profit organizations as they depend on an unpaid workforce for key tasks (Garner & Garner, 2011).

Garner and Garner (2011) describe the relationship between the organization and volunteers as mutually beneficial. However, since volunteers are not usually financially dependent on the organization<sup>1</sup>, they may be less invested than paid employees to address a problematic situation. Recently, volunteerism has become increasingly attractive for pro-social business venturing, who attract volunteers with non-financial rewards (e.g. benevolence, goodwill etc.) (Austin, Stevenson, & Wei-Skillern, 2006; Farny et al., 2018).

As we learned through the examination of existing literature, the nature of community enterprises is highly diverse (e.g. differentiates through culture, ambitions, size etc.). Due to this diverse nature, we still know very little about the driving motives for establishing CBEs in an industrialized context or how they operate and change shape over time. By taking the lens of volunteers in a CBE, this study offers a better understanding of CBE dynamics and the underexplored field of community entrepreneurship in the industrialized context.

The previous section provides an overview of the phenomena community-based enterprising and volunteerism and their interlinkage as valuable contribution to academic literature. In the following excerpts, we will direct the focus towards relevant theoretical backgrounds that facilitate the exploration of the topic.

## **2.2. Integrated Theoretical Approach on Nested Identification Processes**

As previously stated, this research aims to shed light on the dynamics of identification processes within a temporal setting. In the subsequent excerpt, you find a brief overview of the three relevant topics for this study: identity, identification and temporality. While this study focuses on identification processes, identity is a fundamental part of this process and thus constitutes to the theoretical grounding. First, we start with examining identity and how it is defined in an organizational context. As we are delving into the identification dynamics in a temporal setting, we particularly focus how identities develop across level as part of nested identities. Second, we define identification and relevant terms in regard to this particular paper. As last point, we touch on the role of temporality for this research.

Developed and sustained through processes of social interaction, the term identity describes the meaning that an individual attributes to him or herself. Identity is shaped along the journey to answer the question of existence (“*who am I*”) (Brown, 2015; Cerulo, 1997;

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<sup>1</sup> Volunteers serve for either a timely limited period or simply “*out of goodness of their heart*” (Garner & Garner, 2011)

Gergen & Gergen, 1988). There is a wide range of how an individual can attach meaning to the self and identities can be distinct. To quote an example, an individual's social identity may be determined through gender, nationality or socio-economic background. Other distinctions of identities are, for example, role or personal identities (Winkler, 2018).

Another way to differentiate between identities is to examine whether an identity is self-assigned or assigned to by others (Winkler, 2018). In summary, identity is used to spot, characterize or differentiate a specific entity in a network of related entities, providing a basis for action (Ashforth, Rogers, & Corley, 2011). Winkler (2018) states that identities are the effects of identity work, which refers to a constant engagement process shaping a coherent conception of who an individual is and how one associates with others (Brown, 2015; Watson, 2008)

In the context of a specific entity, identity work is associated with how its members process the entity's identity. This process includes, for example, the adoption of or accommodation with the respective identity, but also redefines, adjusts or strengthens the individual's identity with the entity over time (Brown, 2015; Fleming & Spicer, 2003).

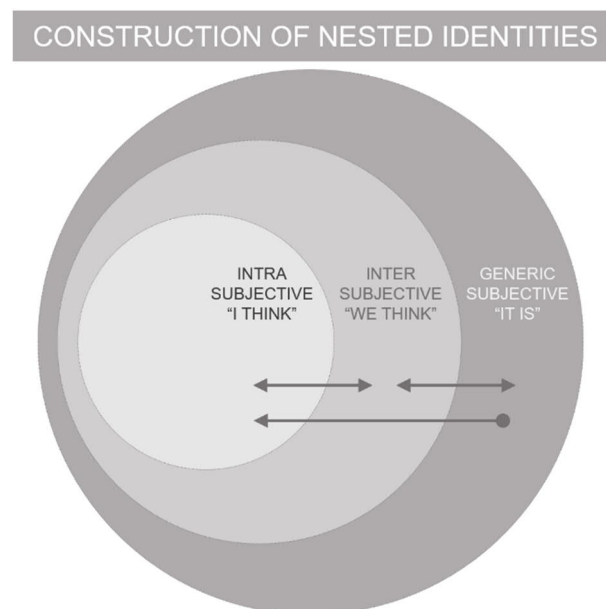
Identities can be considered the starting point for a wide variety of organizational phenomena and outcomes (Ashforth, 2016; Ashforth et al., 2011). In this context, Ashforth et al., (2011) define identity as the "*central, distinctive, and continuous characteristics of an entity*" and hence, describes the essence of an entity.

While most research focuses on a specific identity (single level of analysis), Ashforth et al. (2011) encourage research on the behavior of identities across level. One example of research on cross-level identity is the concept of nested identities, which describes a system where one or more identities are embedded within each other (e.g. in an entity the organizational identity encompasses workgroup or departmental identity (Ashforth et al., 2011). In the case of the five volunteers in Livonsaari, the community enterprise Livonsaari as entity represents the organizational level identity within which we discovered a distinction between organizational identity, EVS group identity and individual identity.

The authors suggest that the identity levels (e.g. individual, group and organizational identity) within an entity form connections and influence each other. Drawing on the structuration theory, negotiated order theory, and the inhabited institutions perspective (Fine, 1984; Giddens, 1984; Hallett, Shulman, & Fine, 2009), Ashforth et al. (2011) argue that

action and structure are recursive: “*action shapes structure and structure shapes action*”, which creates an interlinkage between the identity levels. They furthermore describe the process how collective identities form as transition from individual to shared cognition (from “*I think*” to “*we think*”), which over time possibly molds into an “institutionalized reality” (“*it is*”).

During this process, where the intersubjective level alters beyond an individual cognition and emerges as the synthesis of two or more interacting levels, a level of social reality is formed (Ashforth et al., 2011). The authors describe this as shared mental model to facilitate sense-making. The theoretical concept of how nested identities are constructed can be found below in *Figure 2*.



*Figure 2 - Construction of Nested Identities according to Ashforth et al. (2011)*

The degree to which individuals define themselves in terms of other individuals, relationships or groups is called identification (Pratt, 1998). Cooper & Thatcher (2010) agree with this description by stating that identification is the self-definition with specific relationships. Employee Identification, for example, describes how employees view themselves as part of their organization. The nature of this identification affects the outcome of work<sup>2</sup>.

<sup>2</sup> For example, a person with a strong employee identification influences the commitment towards the company differently than the one of a person with weak employee identification

An individual can identify through the association with other individuals, groups or entire entities, which are in the following referred to as targets. Depending on the association with a target, we differentiate between relational and collective identification (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010).

Relational identification refers to relationships between two particular individuals, which in an organizational context usually refers to co-workers. Within a workplace environment, relational identification describes the extent to which individuals define themselves through specific role relationships with other individuals (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010).

In contrast, collective identification develops when an individual perceives other members of the same organization similarly. The sense of connectedness within an organization supports the achievement of common objectives. In short, collective identification implies the belonging to a larger entity, which Cooper and Thatcher (2011) further distinguish between workgroup and organizational identification.

A workgroup is a distinct unit that works on interconnected tasks with other workgroups within an organizational context. Hence, workgroup identification describes the degree to which a member of this group defines oneself to his or her workgroup. In comparison to organizational identification, workgroup identification is more strongly associated with job satisfaction (van Dick, van Knippenberg, Kerschreiter, Hertel, & Wieseke, 2008). Organizational identification deals with how an individual associates oneself with a specific organization and the respective value system (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010).

Previous research found that identification with any of these targets (co-worker, workgroup and organization) is not mutually exclusive (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010), but it appears that individuals hold a core identification target, with which they more clearly identify in comparison with other targets (see: Cooper & Thatcher, 2010; van Dick, van Knippenberg, Kerschreiter, Hertel, & Wieseke, 2008).

Similarly to the relationship between identity and identity work, identification develops over time as a process to adopt to a specific environment. The identification process is shaped by intrinsic and extrinsic factors and also connected to dynamic responses to changeable situations (Winkler, 2018).

Let us dive deeper into the elements that shape, strengthen or weaken identification processes and into the nature of those elements. Motives are considered psychological needs that drive individuals' behavior, intentions and consequently actions, for example striving for self-expansion, access to status or a desire for belongingness (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010; Ryan & Deci, 2000). Those motives vary depending on the individual's self-concept orientation, which consequently also influences the identification process.

The term self-concept orientation encompasses beliefs about the self, including one's perceptions about roles in society or purpose in life (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010). The self-concept orientation distinguishes whether an individual prioritizes independence (individualist orientation), interpersonal relationships (relationist orientation) or group membership (collectivist orientation). Cooper & Thatcher (2010) argue that each person innately has all three self-concepts, however one orientation is usually the dominant one and thus differentiates individuals from each other.

As motives and self-concept orientation shape the identification process intrinsically and as the motives innately linked to an individual, it is possible that some individuals identify stronger with one specific identification target compared to other targets within the same organization (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010).

Besides the intrinsic factors that shape an individual's identification with an entity, there are also extrinsic triggers that affect this process. In the context of identity work, Winkler (2018) exemplifies this process through emotional experiences. Changes in the workplace like high fluctuation of workgroup members or organizational responses to economic decisions evoke particular emotions (e.g. excitement, frustration, anger, disappointment etc.), which in turn affect an individual's identity (Winkler, 2018). Similarly to identity work do external events or interactions influence how individuals identify with different targets within an organization.

Granqvist & Gustafsson (2016) state that temporality is a complex construct and foundational for organizations as context-specific temporal structures frame pace and rhythm of change within organizations. Events and interactions that evolve over time constantly challenge those temporal structures (Granqvist & Gustafsson, 2016). Jansen &

Shipp (2018) found in their study about fit<sup>3</sup> that in order to understand how individuals interpret current fit, it is necessary to examine what they recollect and forecast. As we examine dynamics of identification processes within a broader organizational context, it is necessary to consider the implications of temporality. Jansen & Shipp (2018) differentiate between clock time (actual passage of time) and psychological time (perceptions of time in the current moment), which are both factors of temporality in this case study.

### **2.3. Objective of our Research**

In summary, the fundamental changes that have coined the 21<sup>st</sup> century and the rise of a new social reality call for new, innovative and disruptive approaches as alternatives to solely growth and profit oriented business practices. Through the integration of its members in entrepreneurial activities, community enterprising as organizational form emphasizes the triple bottom line approach (Salmivaara, 2017; Slaper & Hall, 2011), bridging social and environmental aspects with financial sustainability and is therefore discussed as alternative business approach in the sustainable development debate. Yet, an excursion in existing literature reveals that we still know little about the role and potential of community-based enterprises for sustainable development. One field of this discussion deals with volunteers and their willingness to devote time and labor without financial rewards. Academics come to the conclusion that volunteerism is a crucial element for the existence of community enterprises (Farny et al., 2018; Garner & Garner, 2011). Hence, with our study, we are encouraged to explore the underappreciated field of community-based entrepreneurship with a particular focus on identification dynamics of volunteers within a community setting. For this research, we chose the community-based enterprise (CBE) Livonsaari in the Naantali municipality in Southern Finland.

Thus, based on the concept of nested identities, the following intensive single case study sheds light on how volunteers, over the course of a seven months program, identify with other individuals, workgroup relationships and the community within a given organizational setting (in this case the CBE Livonsaari). Translated into our research question, this study seeks to answer how the identification with one specific target (e.g. workgroup) influences the identification with other targets (e.g. organization or individuals) over time.

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<sup>3</sup> Jansen and Shipp (2018) explain fit as compatibility between a person and his or her environment.

The purpose of this research study is to build generalizable theory for the two phenomena community enterprising and volunteerism. As an inductive-abductive approach was used for the data analysis procedure, where data and theory are used in tandem to further abstract from the field data, this study furthermore provides empirical validity and contributes to existing theories on temporal nested identification processes.

### **3. RESEARCH CONTEXT**

Despite the appreciation of an increasingly interconnected societies on a global level, it is necessary to take the imperative of acting at the local level into consideration (Peredo & Chrisman, 2006). One of the factors that makes each community enterprise unique is its location and the societal setting within which the CBE operates (Soviana, 2014). Thus, in the following section, we examine the cultural perspective of the CBE Livonsaari. Furthermore, we provide background information on the CBE Livonsaari and the program that connects volunteers with the community.

According to the cultural dimensions of Hofstede Insights (2018), Finnish culture demonstrates appreciation for equality and low hierarchies. Generally, the tone of communication is direct and participative. In business activities, power is decentralized, and managers highly rely and believe in the contributions of their team members. Furthermore, equality, solidarity and quality in the workplace environment is valued and tensions are approached through compromise and negotiation. Even though there is a strong sense of equality and solidarity, Finland is considered an individualistic society, which implies that individuals take care of themselves rather than rely on community for support in times of need (Hofstede Insights, 2018).

To further place the case Livonsaari into perspective, I would like to direct the focus on the overall landscape of social enterprises in the Nordic countries. The sphere of social enterprises in Finland includes a wide range of organizational forms, including community enterprises. In terms of reaching their targets, Finnish social enterprises have been achieving a high level of success (Simons, 2016). The author (2016) states that generally in the Nordic countries, where the third sector does not have a tradition of providing services, social enterprises are seen to gradually close the gap between public and third sector activities.



As previously stated, the study deals with the community-based enterprise Livonsaari, which also serves as location for the data collection for this study. The Livonsaari community is located in the Naantali municipality in the south-western region of Finland. Established in 2004, the community is registered as community-based enterprise, where the village members drive entrepreneurial activities within the community. The Livonsaari CBE has a village board, comprising fifteen members.

Altogether, the CBE has approximately 220 members, who differ in terms of their membership. A-members hold shares of the CBE and usually live in the community. Being an A-member grants the member the right to participate in village meetings and vote on communal decisions. Currently, approximately 40 people hold an A-membership. B-members do not have voting rights in communal decisions and are generally considered supporters of the community. With the shared vision on sustainable consumption and eco-friendly construction, the village entrepreneurs have brought a range of services to the region, including folk artisan crafts, organically baked goods, wood construction and a saddle manufactory. The community also offers accommodation for visitors (Livonsaari.fi, 2018).

One example of a shared governance system within the CBE is the Livonsaari Cooperative Garden, which was founded 2012. The initiative follows the principles of Community Supported Agriculture (CSA). The CSA concept describes a model where individuals support farming practices on a piece of land that belongs to the community. The farmers and consumers share the risks and benefits of communal food production (United States Department of Agriculture, 2018). The mission of the Livonsaari Cooperative Garden is to cultivate and supply locally and organically produced food to the community members and possibly sell the excess amounts to non-villagers. Like in the CSA model, the community members participate in financing of agricultural activities in the form of a flat rate payment and thus share the risk of a bad harvest (Livonsaari.fi, 2018).

The **European Voluntary Service** (EVS) is an international volunteer program, which is financed by the European Commission. Based on six core principles<sup>4</sup>, the program empowers young adults to execute a voluntary service in organizations or communities all around the world to learn about new cultures and to foster personal development. During the program, participants receive reimbursements for travels expenses and a lump sum to cover cost of living in the host country (European Commission, n.d.).

By the end of 2018, the **European Solidarity Corps** (the Corps) program replaced the European Voluntary Service. The Corps is now the main program in the European Union to provide volunteering opportunities for young people, building on European Voluntary Service's success and quality developments (European Union, n.d.-b).

Niina, one of the EVS coordinators in Livonsaari, explains how the connection with the EVS volunteers came to life:

*It all started with this international work camp (talkoot), where there were about 20 people here for one week. It was before we started living here, so I didn't experience this, but at least I know that the other community members didn't want to have a "work camp" again because it's very hard to find work for 20 people at the same time. You have to keep the helpers occupied for one week and then it is so much work to prepare food for them and provide a place to sleep. There were too many people, so it didn't work.*

*Six or seven years ago, the first EVS participant came to Livonsaari. In the next year we had two and the year after that, there were three EVS. It was good because we needed more help in the Garden. Also, the idea was that the EVS volunteers could reduce the number of "wwoofers"<sup>5</sup>. It was already in the second year of EVS participation that community*

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<sup>4</sup> The six fundamental principles of the EVS program are:

- increasing your own skills through the practical experience of volunteering abroad;
- encouraging the learning of another language;
- developing the ability to interact with persons of different language and culture;
- spreading tolerance among young people of the European Union;
- promoting active citizenship;
- supporting the development of local communities.

<sup>5</sup> Wwoofer = willing worker on organic farms

*members, who usually relied on wwoofers, would use the EVS volunteers to help them. The problem with the wwoofers is that you choose someone but it is unpredictable how long they will stay with you – maybe one week, ten weeks, one month – and you never know how it will work with them.*

*Also for the village people, it's not nice that here are constantly people coming and going, you don't know them, they are changing all the time. Wwoofers never learned to live in this village in their own way. Then in the community, we decided that having three EVS volunteers wasn't enough and four EVS wasn't enough either. Now we have five EVS, which seems like the right number.*

(Interview – Niina – Conversation on EVS – 08.07.18)

The volunteers that I accompanied in 2018 as part of my research participated in the EVS program. The official name of the EVS (now ESC) program in Livonsaari is called “Island of Opportunity” with the aim “*to host up to five curious youngsters, who are willing to have an experience of their lifetime*” during their seven months stay in the community enterprise Livonsaari (Livonsaari Ry, n.d.). During their time in Livonsaari, common tasks of the EVS include among other things the cultivation of vegetables in the community garden, the maintenance, renovation and development of communal buildings or the organization of community festivities and promoting the ecovillage in a variety of festivals (European Union, n.d.-a). For simplification, the term EVS refers to the program and to the people interchangeably. Consequently, we use the term EVS as synonym for volunteers.

After diving into the background of this study, the following chapter deals with the methodological grounding of this study where we provide an explanation of the research philosophy, information on the case framing and the process of data collection.

## **4. METHODOLOGY**

This master thesis is a qualitative research study based on ethnographic principles. We chose a qualitative research approach as it provides the opportunity to focus on a complex phenomenon in its contexts (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008a). In our case this is the role of

volunteerism in community enterprises. Given the reflexive and spiraling nature of this ethnographic research, new insights derive with every visit, which require an adaptation of the entire research process as the study proceeds. Hence, the final conceptualization of this research is a re-specification of the original formulation of the concept (Gobo, 2011).

Let me briefly exemplify this: during the course of the data collection process, access to information as well as generation of new insights depended on my personal interaction with community members and their availability during my visits. At this point, it is important to mention the full research team at Aalto University, which constitutes of my thesis supervisor Prof. Ewald Kibler, Steffen Farny (PhD) and Lauri J. Laine (PhD candidate). After every site visit, we discussed the progress of the data collection with either the full research team or single members. Those meetings enabled me to direct the research aim in the most feasible and meaningful direction.

Consequently, the research focus shifted various times throughout the knowledge production process. While the initial intention was to shed deeper insights on the phenomenon of community enterprises in general, the final research outcome seeks to better understand identification processes of volunteers within the setting of a CBE.

The purpose of this study is to contribute to a better understanding of the dynamics of these processes and it attempts to propose factors that help explaining the processes. After a thorough **5-Step Data Analysis Process** (which is described in more detail in the Data Analysis Section), the final research outcome seeks to address the question how the identification with one specific target (e.g. workgroup) influences the identification with other targets (e.g. organization or individuals) over time.

#### **4.1. Research Philosophy, Design and Case Framing**

The ontological starting point of the thesis is **constructionism**, which views reality as subject to an individual's and group's interpretation. According to the principles of constructionism, two exact realities cannot exist, as reality is an output of social and cognitive processes (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008b). Since the research follows ethnographic principles, as researcher, I am closely connected to the production process of knowledge and insights that result from this thesis. Creswell (2013) describes the final product of an ethnographic research as comprehensive portrait that includes not only the participants' (emic) but also the researcher's perspective (etic). Therefore, in terms of

epistemology, the thesis comprises a **subjectivist** view, according to which the external world is accessible only through personal observation and interpretation (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008b).

The philosophical position towards the case study is based on the principles of **interpretivism**. Throughout the data collection process, I tightly worked, lived and interacted with the community members and volunteers in Livonsaari. Thus, an interpretive position is inevitable for pursuing this intensive single case study.

To generate a deep understanding of the research phenomena, an inductive, qualitative research design was chosen as it allows for letting the data guide the researchers towards the most pertinent themes (Farny et al., 2018; Langley & Abdallah, 2011). This study particularly focuses on the experiences of the five EVS volunteers and examines how the role of nested identities affects the affiliation with different identification targets within a given setting.

The practice of observing people in their natural environment to understand their needs is called ethnography (Isaacs, 2013). According to Creswell (2013), ethnographic research aims to examine shared patterns of beliefs or behavior of a specific group of people who interact with each other over time. To shed light on the dynamics of nested identities for the identification process of volunteers towards the community over time, an ethnographic research methodology was chosen for this dissertation.

Ethnography has its origin in the anthropology and social sciences and does not have a traditional role in understanding the needs of customers in an industry context, where users' needs are rather explored through survey and focus groups. Isaacs (2013) points out that *"asking people what they want only brings you so far"*. Observing people in their natural environment provides insights into routines that have become invisible to the people performing them (Isaacs, 2013).

Furthermore, due to the focus on how identification develops over time, this study incorporates elements of process research. **Process research** deals with understanding how things evolve over time and why they evolve (Langley, 1999). Langley (1999) explains that process data consist of narratives that incorporate the factor of time (e.g. events, activities, and choices). The fluid character of the EVS journeys over seven months can be considered a process phenomenon as it deals with the development of relationships between volunteers

and community members as well as how individuals react or interpret situations at a specific point during the program (Langley, 1999).

Among others, Soviana (2014) describes community-based enterprises as heterogeneous entities as their governance structures highly differ depending on the contextual situation, performance, value system and organizational architecture. Based on the unique structures of every CBE, the objective of this thesis is to gather detailed and holistic insights about a single case - the CBE Livonsaari. Rather than comparing the Livonsaari case with other CBEs, an **intensive single case study** focuses on gaining a better and richer understanding how volunteers identify with the community and which factors strengthen or hinder this identification process.

Generally, case studies can be described as a defined system with boundaries, which is explored over time through in-depth data collection (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008c). This **intensive single case study** of the community Livonsaari serves to examine the interlinkage between the phenomena volunteerism and community enterprising. The purpose of this research study is to build generalizable theory for the two above mentioned phenomena. As I used an inductive-abductive approach for the data analysis procedure, where data and theory are used in tandem to further abstract from the field data, this study furthermore provides empirical validity and contributes to existing theories, which are according to Eisenhardt (1989) the core strengths of case studies.

Additionally, the dissertation reports ethnographic insights into social dynamics and interaction between community members and volunteers by providing contextualized description through elaborating on cultural meanings and development of understanding relationships (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008c). Through the inductive research design, this thesis builds generalizable theory for the phenomena community enterprising and volunteerism by drawing on a rich and thick description of one specific CBE case.

## **4.2. Research Ethics**

The reflection on relationships between the researcher and the study participants is one of the strengths of ethnographic research and at the same time constantly challenges the researcher how to maintain those relationships (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008e). This research style requires the researcher to get to know people and to build trustworthy relationships over the course of the research project. Eriksson & Kovalainen (2008d) state

that research is required to protect the people who take part in the study. Prior to my data collection process, the research team around Prof. Ewald Kibler had already established a research relationship with the community. Community members had been informed about the intention of a long-term study project of the Livonsaari CBE and the research team gained the informed consent to pursue this study.

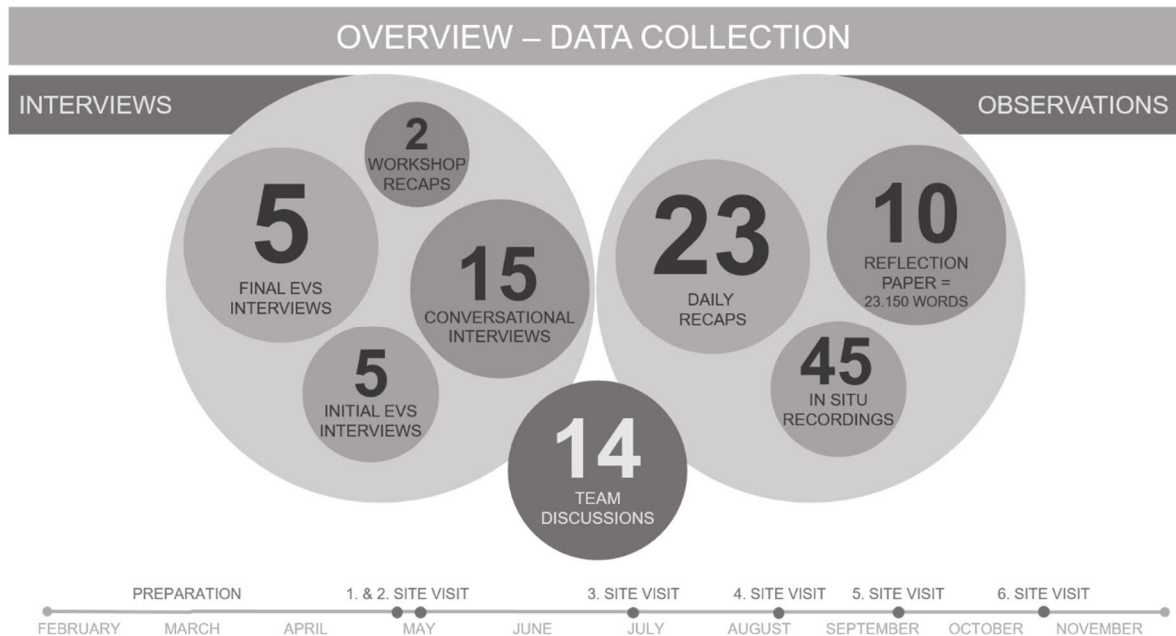
During my field work in Livonsaari, I encountered many individuals, including permanent community members, temporal members, volunteers, visitors and seasonal workers and over time I established friendship relationship with some of the people from my Livonsaari experience. To assure the protection and privacy of the individuals, I always introduced myself as ethnographic researcher from Aalto University and my research interest in community enterprising as alternative business concept. Furthermore, I reminded each participant with the start of every interview or recorded conversation about the use of this data and asked for permission to use the data. Several times, I also planned meetings with community members or volunteers ahead of time to assure that they are aware of the purpose of the meeting.

For the following study, the names of the participants have been anonymized to hide the identities of people involved and assure privacy of individuals.

### **4.3. Methods and Data Collection**

Over the course of my research-visits to Livonsaari, the volunteers were my connection to the community as I followed working routines of the EVS, which strengthened my personal connection to the community and its members. In 2018, I visited the community **six** times, which sums up to a total of **35** days in the field. Each of my six visits is depicted in a photo collage in *Appendix A*. After a thorough phase of preparation and background research on the field of community enterprising, my data collection officially started on the **16.05.2018** with my first visit in the research setting Livonsaari. My last visit in Livonsaari ended on the **28.10.2018** and my data collection process officially closed with our team meeting on the **14.11.2018**, which presents the starting point of the data analysis procedure. During **all six** visits in the community, I stayed in the shared living space with the volunteers; at times, we shared housing for over one week. The regular visits helped to create a mutually trustworthy relationship, which allowed the space for sharing personal, emotional insights. I gained a perspective on daily routines and I was able to observe and document the development

within the EVS group and their integration into the Livonsaari setting during the seven months EVS program. Please find an overview of my data in *Figure 3* below.



*Figure 3 - Overview of the Data Collection*

Interviews and ethnographic field data serve as the backbone of the data collection of my dissertation. For this study, **five extensive interviews** were conducted with each of the volunteers at the end of their seven months program in Livonsaari (October 2018). The interview style comprises a mix of “emotionalist” and “constructionist” interview research approach. While the first approach aims to access the authentic experiences of the volunteers, the latter one focuses on the interaction between interviewee and interviewer. Preplanned questions serve as initiator to spark conversations, yet the emphasis is on gaining insights on the journeys of the five volunteers without too much interference of the researcher (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008a).

The interviews, which lasted approximately one hour each, were intentionally conducted in a quiet, peaceful setting, where I could assure to remain undisturbed throughout the duration of the interview. Four out of five interviews took place in a yurt tent close to the volunteers’ accommodation, one took place in the living room of Alitalo while the other volunteers were in the sauna. Alitalo is one of the communal buildings in Livonsaari. It serves as housing for EVS volunteers during their seven-months stay in the community and is a central location in Livonsaari.



Regarding the procedure of the interviews, the interactive interviews were separated in three parts, of which the first two parts focused on the volunteers' Livonsaari experience and the third part aimed to generate insights on their connectedness with people, events or projects within the community structures. For the interviews, A2 size papers were provided for the interviewees to actively draw and share their experiences. In the first part of the interview, each volunteer was asked to share his or her personal journey including the most memorable events that one encountered during the time in Livonsaari. To facilitate the volunteers to narrate their stories, I provided a horizontal timeline, which they were asked to fill in with their experiences and memories of their time as volunteers in Livonsaari.

After the volunteers had shared their personal Livonsaari journey with me, a vertical axis was added to the timeline, ranging from positive on the top over medium to negative at the bottom of the axis. This additional axis built the basis for the second part of the interview. For this part, I asked the volunteers to guide me through their journey again by describing their perception of the previously derived stages of the experience. For the third part of the interview, a relationship map was used to support my conversation with the volunteers. The volunteers were asked to share whom and what they connected with most during their time as volunteers. To clarify, the volunteers could freely choose whether the connectedness was based on personal or timely factors. Those interview results provide the grounding of this research, as they present the experience of the volunteers, which is the focus of my study. Please find an overview of the supporting workshop results in *Appendix B*. While the extensive interviews are situated in the final part of the program, several other methods were used to document the interactions of volunteers among each other and within the setting of Livonsaari throughout the entire course of my data collection process.

The most commonly used methods in ethnographic studies are extensive **observations** of the target group, which includes, for example, to follow the participants' daily routines (Creswell, 2013; Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008d). Observations facilitate to capture shared patterns among a specific group of people and thus serve as one of the main sources of empirical data for this research. In order to record my observations, I used different approaches throughout my community visits.

The most regular used approach to capture my observations were *in situ* **voice notes**. To assure the strengthening of the knowledge production, throughout my visits in Livonsaari, I

used *in situ* **voice notes** to record my personal feelings, observations and perceptions of a specific moment. I carried my voice recorder at all times when in Livonsaari, which allowed me to instantly record a certain situation I considered noteworthy. In some instances, community members allowed me to record our **conversations in situ**, which lasted at times only few minutes and sometimes an hour. Altogether, I recorded **45 in situ** voice notes and **15** conversational interviews.

Those *in situ* recordings were complemented by **daily recapitulation**, which I recorded almost every day to keep track of events, interactions and general observations during my visits in Livonsaari. In contrast to my *in situ* recording, my daily recapitulations incorporate the timespan of one day and thus include first elements of reflections and processes of my observations. I thoroughly processed my **daily recapitulations** after each visit, resulting in a detailed research diary for each visit. Those recapitulations allowed for a revisit of specific moments in time as well as reflection time to place a moment into a larger context of events and interactions. Throughout my time in Livonsaari, I recorded **23** daily recapitulations, which have a proximal average length of **15 minutes**.

While the daily recapitulations and *in situ* interviews capture a temporal snapshot, I used **reflection papers** to address more overarching topics. Those papers draw connections between experiences during several visits, link narratives of different people and incorporate my personal sense-making of the community over time. These reflection papers are a valuable contribution to the daily recordings as they take a wider perspective into consideration and allow for crystalizing interlinkages between different actors, events or processes. My total number of reflection papers sums up to **10 documents** with a total word count of over **23,000 words**.

Additionally to my personal recordings, we arranged **regular team meetings** with the full research team (approximately once per month) to discuss my experiences in the research setting and put them into perspective with previously gathered information.

#### **4.4. Reflexivity**

A crucial element for this research design is reflexivity as it strengthens the knowledge production. The reflexivity process refers to the researcher's responsibility to critically inspect the research process and to think about personal biases and assumptions. Reflexivity

is a necessary procedure to establish validity of the study results (Eriksson & Kovalainen, 2008b).

As described in the previous section, the multiplicity of methods, ranging from daily recordings to reflective papers over team discussions, facilitated the reflexivity process of my research. Especially the combination of daily recording and overall reflection papers helped to spot possible biases in my personal sense-making and process them in a professional manner. Furthermore, our regular team meeting and the general support of the research team helped me maintain a suitable distance to the research subjects (volunteers and community members). The balance between records of a present situation, larger reflection papers and frequent team meetings speaks for the validity of the empirical findings and at the same time serves as sound approach to triangulating my data.

## **5. DATA ANALYSIS**

As previously stated, the nature of an ethnographic research requires a “*reflexive process of reciprocal adjustments*” (Gobo, 2011) throughout the entire research process. Hence, the analytical process included going back and forth between the data and emerging theoretical accounts. Before I started to analyze the interview data, we had regular team meetings during which we discussed the site visits. This allowed me to reflect on my collected data and together with the whole research team, we regularly evaluated possible focal points for the research and changed the focus when necessary.

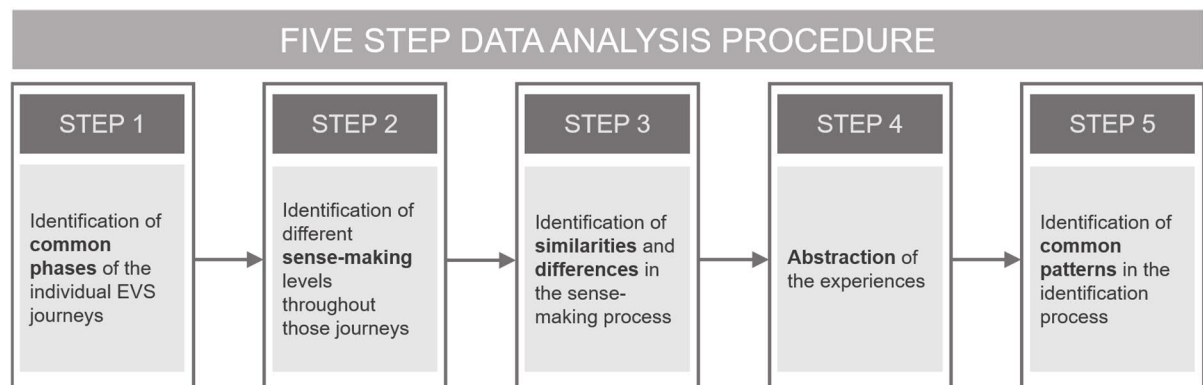
The team meeting on the **14.11.2018**, designed as an interactive workshop, presented the end of my data collection process and at the same time, it was the starting point of the thesis’ analysis procedure. During a workshop, we used the method of context mapping to visualize the contextual information that had been gathered over the course of my visits in Livonsaari. The context map advances the brainstorming method as it adds focus points without losing track of the bigger dimensions (Carleton, Cockayne, & Tahvanainen, 2013 (p. 61)). For our meeting, the aim of the context map was to visualize how volunteers are connected to the community members and vice versa. This method allowed us to gain an overview over available data, which was not limited to the interviews but also open to the perceptions and experiences of all present members during the team meeting. Furthermore, the context

mapping provided a basis to frame the scope of the thesis, as it illustrated not only the availability but also the accessibility of data for an analysis process.

One insight of the workshop was that the community members seemed to experience the volunteers ambiguously throughout the course of the EVS program. While the volunteers brought not only emotional energy and helping hands in the garden, there seemed to be a dependency on the volunteer workforce for the operations of the community. Throughout the data collection process, I observed that the community and its members display various attitudes towards the EVS, ranging from emotional attachment to pragmatic work relationships.

This led to the question whether the ambivalent relationship of the community members had an impact on the volunteers' identification towards the community as an organizational entity and the nested identities within this organizational umbrella. In our workshop, we found that some EVS seemed to identify stronger with the EVS group, while others rather identified with the community as a whole throughout the seven months. Hence, by taking the volunteer lens, the focus point of the data analysis was to gain more insights on how the identification varied among the volunteers and how this identification process developed over the course of the seven months program. Furthermore, we were curious to better understand how the identification with one specific target (e.g. individual, workgroup or organization) influenced other identification targets over time.

Based on the insights of this team meeting, the data was systematically analyzed based on a **5 Step** analysis process, which is displayed below in *Figure 4*.



*Figure 4 - Overview of Data Analysis Procedure*

## 5.1. Identifying Common Phases of the EVS Journeys

The five interviewees were asked to provide a narrative of their personal “Livonsaari Journey”. Thus, as a first step it was necessary to structure the data over time and to identify common phases on the five volunteer journeys. For this step, the principles of Langley’s temporal bracketing strategy were used to decompose temporal processes (1999). Following the Langley’s strategy, comparative units of analysis were created, which are in the following sections referred to as *phases*. The comparative phases were the basis to explore and replicate theoretical ideas, particularly for a process analysis and sense making. As the EVS operated within the frame of the community-enterprise Livonsaari over a timely limited period, this structuration theory, which describes that actions of individuals are constrained by structural systems, was suitable for our data set. In this case, it framed the EVS within the setting of Livonsaari.

A further advantage of breaking the data down into successive neighboring phases is to examine how actions of one period lead to changes in the larger context that will affect action in subsequent periods. This initial step paved the way for the following analytical steps towards a better understanding of how identification with different nested identities affect the overall identification process among volunteers in the temporal setting of the EVS program. Since the EVS did not always tell their story chronologically, I used references such as events or excursions to assure that the phases are in line for all five volunteers. The common phases that were identified after the first analysis step are depicted below in *Figure 5*.

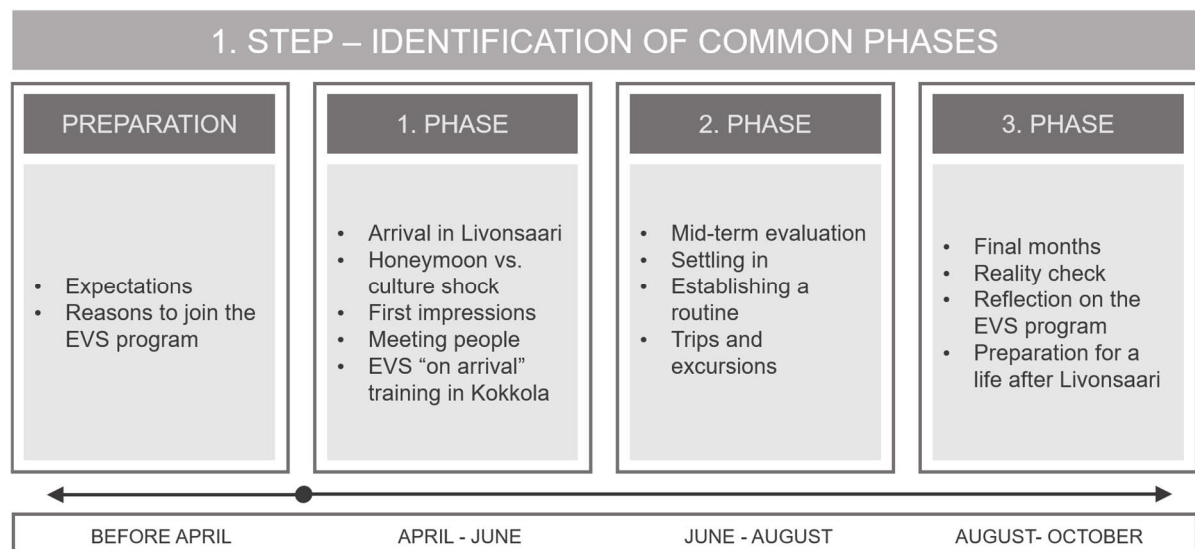


Figure 5 - Analysis Step 1: Identification of common phases of the EVS journeys

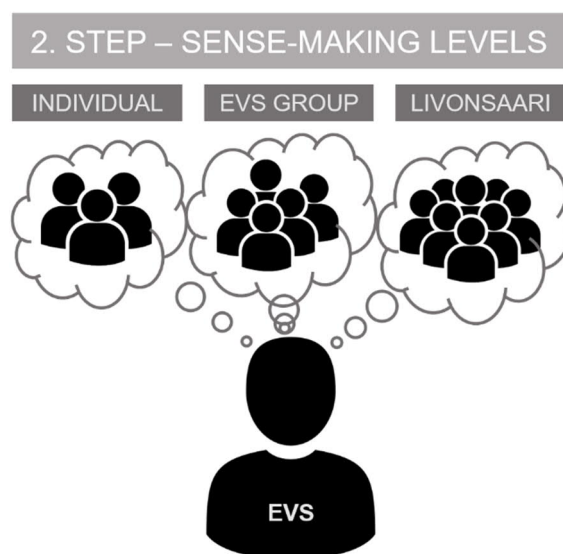
In the process of identifying common phases of the volunteer journeys, it became visible that in several cases the individuals experienced the same situation differently. This seemed to impact how each individual volunteer related him or herself to the EVS group and the community as a whole.

## **5.2. Identifying Different Sense-Making Levels**

The first analysis step supported the initial assumption that the volunteers relate and identify themselves differently towards the community over the course of the EVS program. As this study focuses on how nested identities influence the overall identification process over time, sense-making became an important lens to understand how each volunteer gave meaning to their experience within the setting of Livonsaari.

A sense-making perspective was suitable for a temporal process, which focused on discrepancies of experiences and perceptions. By identifying different levels of sense-making, differences and similarities were noticed, interpreted and given meaning in a narrative format (Jansen & Shipp, 2018). Furthermore, sense-making was a useful lens at this point in the analysis as it was tied to the creation of identity. The way a person is, shapes how someone makes decisions and how one interprets specific situations (Jansen & Shipp, 2018; Watson, 2009). By focusing on how the volunteers make sense of their experience in Livonsaari, the data became more comparable regarding the differences and similarities of identification towards the community.

As a result, the second analytical step aimed to filter out sense-making levels of each of the five volunteers. Based on the three successive phases, we inductively divided the interview data how each volunteer related perceptions, reflections and experiences (1) to themselves, (2) to the group and (3) to the community as a whole (please see *Figure 6*).



*Figure 6 - Analysis Step 2: Identification of Sense-Making Levels*

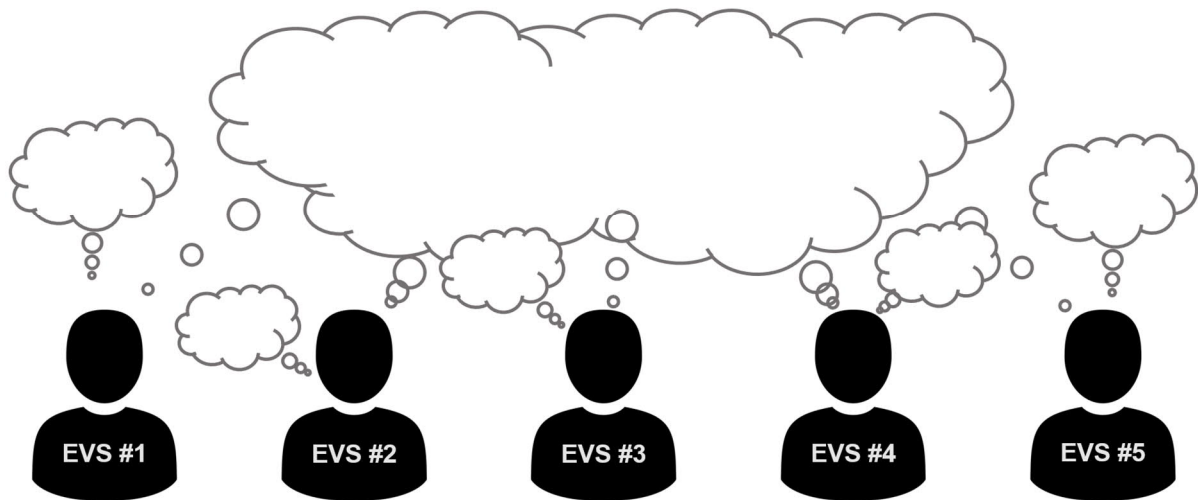
Afterwards, the raw interview data was summarized into general themes, which was done individually per each volunteer. This resulted in an overview of how each EVS volunteer made sense of his or her experiences throughout their Livonsaari journey based on the three (four) phases.

### **5.3. Identifying Similarities and Differences in the Sense-Making Process**

After we derived the three levels of sense-making, it became apparent that some volunteers experienced a certain situation similarly, while the others made sense of the same situation differently. The second analytical step also demonstrated that some EVS connected a particular event with a positive narrative, which was either not mentioned at all or told from a neutral or even negative perspective by another volunteer.

Thus, the aim of the third analytical step was to point out similarities and differences between the individuals' sense-making processes. While in the previous step, the sense-making analysis was conducted with the data of each individual EVS, the third step focused on identifying shared and divergent experiences, perceptions or emotions of the volunteers within a specific phase (refer to *Figure 7*). This step provided a first understanding how shared and divergent experiences strengthened or hindered the level of identification at a specific point during the EVS program. Please find an example of how the 3. Step was analyzed in *Appendix C*.

### 3. STEP – SIMILARITIES AND DIFFERENCES



*Figure 7 - Analysis Step 3: Similarities and Differences in the Sense-Making Process*

#### **5.4. Abstracting the Experiences**

While the third step allowed for a better understanding of common themes during the EVS program, the data still lacked a comparable ground to assess the level of identification. Thus, in the fourth analytical step, I explored the volunteers' experiences on a more abstract level to increase their comparability. After the separation in temporal phases and analyzing the data through a sense-making lens, I used the three identification targets provided by Cooper & Thatcher (2010) to analyze the level identification of each individual EVS.

Cooper & Thatcher (2010) explain that the self-concept orientation of an individual influences the motivation to identify with an identification target. They provide the following three target identifications (1) coworker, (2) workgroup and (3) organizational identification.

These three identification targets can be associated with the concept of nested identities. Ashforth et al. (2011) explain nested identities as identities that are embedded within each other. According to the authors, these nested identities undergo processes, which create organization-based identities in the first place and influence the nature of identities at other levels (e.g. the organizational identification target shapes the identification with the workgroup or other individuals). For the Livonsaari case, the identification targets translate to (1) the volunteer experience of the individual and the relationships with other individuals, (2) the EVS group and (3) the community as organizational identification target. Please find



an overview of the how Cooper & Thatcher's (2010) identification targets correspond to the ones in the Livonsaari case in *Figure 8* below.



*Figure 8 - Analysis Step 4: Correlation between Identification Targets*

To increase the comparability, in this step, the level of identification towards the respective targets was assessed by the abstracted terms **strong**, **medium** and **weak**. Initially, I based the identification assessment only on the interview data. In a second assessment round, I validated this assessment with other field data derived throughout my research visits.

An example of how the data was abstracted can be found in *Appendix D*. This section in the Appendix also includes an overview of the identification paths for each identification target.

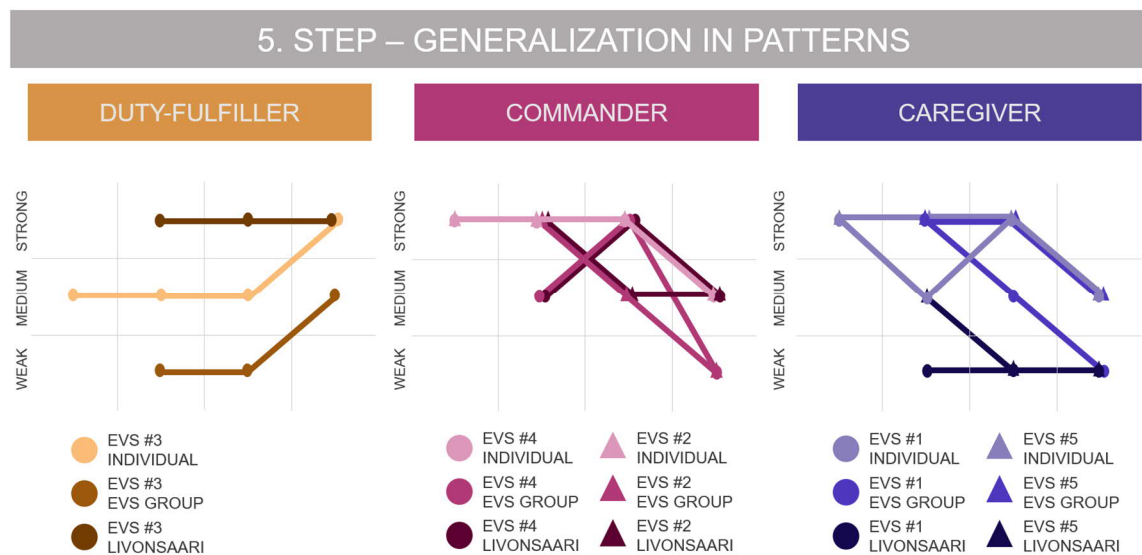
## 5.5. Identifying Common Pattern in the Identification Process

In the fifth step, we provided a visual summary of step four, which depicts the development of identification towards the three targets over the three (four including “preparation”) phases of the voluntary program. The visualization did not only allow pointing out changes in the level of identification over time, but it also gave reason for generalization of common patterns among the EVS.

Thus, first, I summarized the overview per identification target (individual, EVS group, Livonsaari), resulting in three graphs to display all volunteer identification paths. Second, in consultation with the research team, we identified three general patterns that displayed a similar path of identification, a general trend or a unique characteristic, differentiating them from other identification paths (initial labelling: “one”, “two”, and “three”). To quote an example of the generalization process, one EVS displayed as only one of the five volunteers an increase in identification behavior toward the end of the program. This distinction from the other identification paths led to the generalization of the first pattern. The other two

patterns derived from their distinction regarding their organizational identification, where two volunteers had a continuously weak identification throughout their time in Livonsaari and two other EVS displayed a medium identification with the organization.

After a first round of generalization with the research team, the patterns were then again reviewed and analyzed for similarities to validate the initial assessment. In this step, the patterns were labeled as (1) Dutiful, (2) Commanding and (3) Caregiving pattern. The labelling corresponded with behavioral types and identification motives that the patterns displayed throughout their Livonsaari experience. An overview of the three patterns can be found below in *Figure 9*.



*Figure 9 - Analysis Step 5: Overview of the Three Derived Identification Patterns*

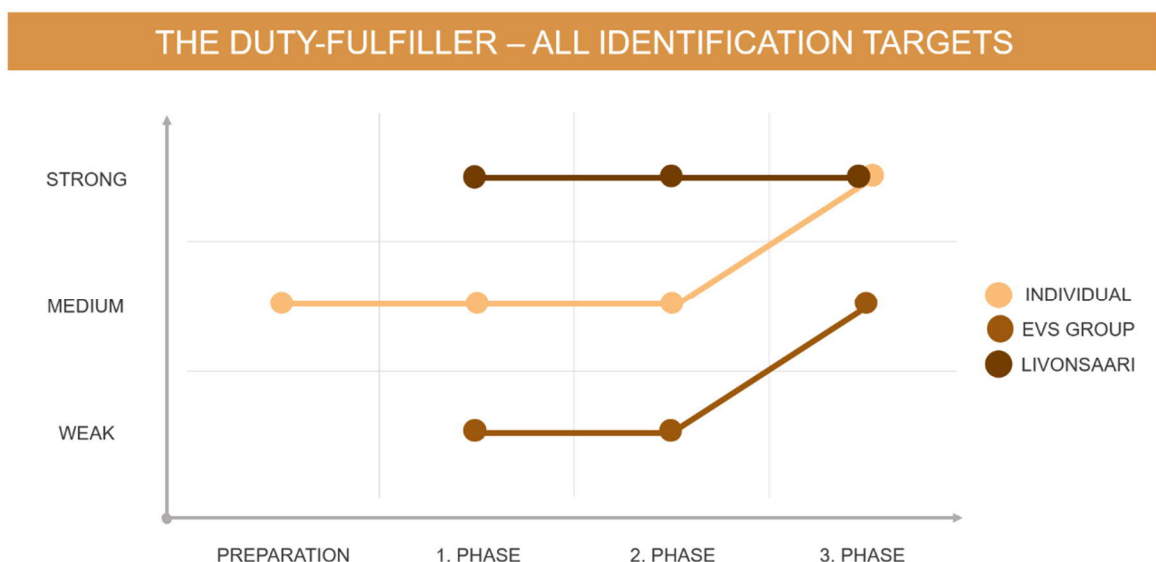
The abstraction into the three patterns provides the final part of the analytical process and leads us into the findings section of my thesis. With reference to the integrative framework of Cooper & Thatcher (2010), the following section provides three narratives to explain each pattern of volunteer identification within the setting of the community enterprise Livonsaari. For reference to the work of Cooper & Thatcher (2010), the original version of the framework can be found in *Appendix E*.

## 6. FINDINGS

As stated above, the following section provides a detailed excursion into the three nested identification patterns among volunteers in the Livonsaari community that have been the result of the 5 Step Analysis Process. First, we describe the identification development of each pattern towards the three targets (individual, EVS group and Livonsaari). Afterwards, we explore the uniqueness of each pattern and how temporality, self-concept orientation and identification motives influence the overall identification dynamics. Finally, we derive with one overall proposition for each pattern, which serves as basis for the discussion of our findings.

### 6.1. The Dutiful Pattern

The Duty-Fulfiller displays the Livonsaari journey of volunteer #3 and a corresponding overview can be found below in *Figure 10*. The unique characteristic of this pattern is the continuously strong identification with the community Livonsaari. From the beginning of the seven months volunteer program, EVS #3 demonstrates a strong sense of belonging to the community. While the relational identification is assessed as medium, EVS #3 displays a strong contrast between the two collective identification: the strong identification with the community is opposed to the weak identification with the EVS group on a workgroup target.



*Figure 10 - The Identification Dynamics of the Dutiful Pattern*

Another important feature of this pattern is the general continuity throughout the EVS program. There are no drastic surges or declines from one phase to the next throughout all targets – the identification towards the three targets remain relatively stable. Visible changes in the identification take place from the 2. to the 3. Phase, where the identification towards the EVS group increases from weak to medium and on the individual level from medium to strong.

One of the most memorable moments that I associate with the volunteers in Livonsaari goes back to my first visit to the community in May 2018. At that point, the community appears to me like a different world and I try my best to make sense of it: every situation, every interaction with people and places in Livonsaari is extremely stimulating. The volunteers immediately take Lauri (my research colleague) and me along with them to work at Mika's house a little outside of the community. Mika is a community member who currently lives with his family at one of the communal houses in Livonsaari. I capture the work dynamics of the EVS in my first reflection paper:

*When I visited Livonsaari for the first time with Lauri, we were impressed by the activism of the volunteers. At Mika's place, we could observe an extremely hardworking bunch of young people, who seemed keen to make most of their time. During the lunch break, we ate together, played dart, joked around and went for a swim before we started working again in the afternoon. I never heard anyone complaining (except maybe for myself). Mika really cared about everyone's well-being and he seemed genuinely happy about his active helpers. As appreciation for the work, he sponsored the lunch and some beer for each of us (including Lauri and me). We finished the day at Mika's with a sauna session - to me it was the perfect combination of work and pleasure.*

(Reflection Paper – Anabel Fischer – Volunteers – 23.05.2018)



*Image 1 - Lunch Break at Mika's House & Dinner in front of Alitalo. Date: 16.05.2018*

The day at Mika's house perfectly exemplifies EVS #3's strong identification with the organizational level. It is more about physical activities and rewards for the labor (e.g. preparation of lunch, coffee breaks etc.), than about deep relationships with individuals and coworkers. In several actions and activities throughout the program, the Duty-Fulfiller prioritizes the connection to the overall entity over personal interests and meaningful relationships. Without deep connections to individuals, EVS #3 finds great motivation in supporting people around the community. Several times during the final interview, EVS #3 emphasizes that *"you're helping anyone, who lives in this village, and if they need some help then you are helping them."* (#3)

Cooper & Thatcher (2010) explain that one driver for the identification with the organizational target is **depersonalized belongingness**, which describes the desire to seek out groups in which one feels similar to other members (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010). The strong identification with the community through **depersonalized belongingness** affects also the relational level with other individuals. As visible in the development in the individual path, the Duty-Fulfiller appears to require adjustment time for the role of being a volunteer. In the initial phase, the Dutiful pattern is coined by a lacking interest in establishing personal relations with other individuals. An adaption process to the new environment shapes the 1. Phase, where only little energy remains to be reinvest in interpersonal relations. While it is not mainly about the quality of relationships, connecting to various community members allows #3 to enhance the learning experiences, which in return maintain a continuously strong identification with the organizational target.

Particularly upon initial struggles of adapting to a life in Livonsaari, the Duty-Fulfiller conveys a desire to know where one belongs in the social environment. According to Cooper & Thatcher (2010) this is linked to the motive of **uncertainty reduction**, which is another reason that supports the strong association with Livonsaari. Especially after experiencing the signs of a culture shock<sup>6</sup> in the beginning of the program, EVS #3 seems to long even stronger for a stable social setting:

*“Yes, there may be not good moments sometimes, but I don't want to remember that. I think everything that I have lived here it was very good.” (#3)*

The desire to reduce uncertainty is also visible in the adaptation of personal behavior to underlying rules for socialization in Livonsaari (see: Cooper & Thatcher, 2010). Several times during my visits, EVS #3 feels responsible to explain to me the “etiquette” of social interaction. I captured an example in my daily notes from May 2018:

*I had a conversation with EVS #3 and #3 dropped that [one] was going to Pietari's place later. As I had been previously invited to join the Finnish classes with Niina, I explained that I would like to join in the evening. As a response, #3 said that one would have to be invited to join a private sauna session and since that was not the case for me, #3 made it clear that it was not sure if I should join. I felt like I was slapped in the face – of course, I did not want to be rude and force myself into a private gathering. So I thought I could just spend the evening with Erica, which would have been also fine. When it was time for the volunteers to leave to the lesson, #4 and #5 clarified that I had nothing to worry about – one person more or less would not make a difference for Pietari. I went to the sauna with the others, but the whole evening I could not fully get rid of the feeling that I had invited myself.*

(Daily Recap – Anabel Fischer – 21.05.2018)

For EVS #3, the adjustment to the social setting appears to be highly important. It is interesting to observe that the Dutiful pattern clearly displays an assimilation to the organizational target while at the same time refuses to accommodate with the workgroup target. This observation is in line with EVS #3's active engagement to participate in Finnish

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<sup>6</sup> EVS #3 states in the final interview that “at the start it was very exciting for me because something is new: new people, new place, new culture, new country. It was weird at the start but now it's very good.”

traditions (Kekri) and learn about local practices (folk healing or log construction) as well as Finnish culture and language.

The motivation of EVS #3 to establish **depersonalized belongingness** as well as reduce uncertainty within the social setting leads to the assumption that the identification process of the Dutiful pattern is dominantly influenced by a **collectivist self-concept orientation**. The collectivist orientation emphasizes the value of groups and group membership (especially on an organizational level) (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010). An example that supports this assessment is captured in my personal observations during the Kekri<sup>7</sup> celebration in October 2018.

*As the [Kekri Celebration] went on, it was time to light the fire. It was huge. The kids were running around it and by that point, everybody had left the barn and stood around the fire. Then it was the time, when the Kekri-Puki also known as #3 arrived at the fire. The years before, Juha was in charge of “scaring” the children; this year, it was #3’s turn to continue the Kekri tradition. #3 wore a full-body costume and from what I saw, #3 did quite a good job. All the kids got their sweets and it was great to see EVS #3 so engaged with the community – the Kekri Puki role was tailored for #3. It seemed to me that the community members appreciated #3’s “work” for their children.*

(Reflection Paper – Anabel Fischer – Kekri Party – 07.11.2018)

As this excerpt indicates, #3 is eager to take over communal tasks and get involved in community activities. The general interaction among people in Livonsaari is mostly action-based, only the founding member seem to have deeply rooted connections that I would consider as friendships. On a practical level, people demonstrate reciprocal support in Livonsaari – I would even go as far as to state that they provide unconditional backing for each other. EVS #3 seems to make sense of that community support in a similar way:

*“All the people are very quiet, kind; they’re always here for you. And also in this village we have mentors, but also the people who live here are very [kind]... they can help you anytime with anything.” (#3)*

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<sup>7</sup> Kekri is a traditional festivity to give thanks for the year’s harvest. At the same time, it represents the end of the harvesting season.

However, the support that #3 describes in the above statement is not innately linked to an emotional or personal connectedness. The collectivist tendencies of the Dutiful pattern to maintain relationships at a rather depersonalized level seem to be fitting for the social structures of Livonsaari.

Throughout the narrative of the Dutiful pattern, the identification with the organizational target stands out clearly, which can be considered the core identification (see: Ashforth et al., 2011). The continuously strong identification with Livonsaari brings up the question what this development implies for the individual and workgroup targets.

The tendency to engage in depersonalized relationships as well as the desire for **uncertainty reduction** provide a possible explanation for the weak identification with the workgroup target. With everyday activities, #3 seems to create a personal distance to the tight and intense EVS workgroup dynamics. From the beginning, EVS #3 separates oneself by deciding to buy own groceries instead of joining the collective approach of the other four volunteers. While the other four EVS create their own little microcosm as an “EVS-family”, EVS #3 withdraws oneself entirely from the relatedness to the volunteers. Even though all members of the EVS group share a house, which makes them live on proximal space together, for EVS #3, it seems to be more about being part of the community than about identifying with the workgroup. In the 1. and 2. Phase, the behavior of #3 even leaves room for speculations that a strong identification with the organizational target in a setting like Livonsaari possibly hinders the identification with the workgroup target.

However, since the identification with the individual as well as the workgroup target increases in the 3. Phase, we can infer that there are reasons, which improve the compatibility between the collective targets (workgroup and organizational target). Our experiences in Livonsaari paired with data from the final interview allow for two possible hypothesis:

One possible reason for the increased compatibility towards the end of the program loops back to the continuously strong identification towards the organizational target. According to Ashforth et al. (2011), the role of proximity plays a role for the concept of nested identities. In higher-order identities (here: Livonsaari target), the downward effects of actions tend to be stronger than the upward effects. The belonging to a group and the finding of a position in a given social setting create a feeling of stability for individuals. Especially after the experience of initial struggles, the feeling of stability and security is important for the sense-



making of the new environment. The striving for stability is a possible explanation for the positive impact on identification on the individual and workgroup target. To quote an example, when EVS #3 establishes a comfortable place in a social setting through the core identification with the organizational target, the remaining energy can be invested into establishing closer bonds with other targets.

Another possible explanation for the improved identification with the individual and workgroup target could be linked to temporality. Particularly in the last months, EVS #3 demonstrates higher engagement with tasks and projects related to the EVS group than at any other point of the program. This development is in line with personal observations and statements from the other volunteers. Both confirm the effort of #3 to integrate oneself more in the volunteer group compared with the 1. and 2. Phase. An example for this effort is the active contribution in finishing the compost toilet – a common project of the EVS group. As the end of the program approaches, EVS #3 might feel a stronger connection to the workgroup, knowing that the time together in Livonsaari is over soon.

The examination of the Dutiful pattern leads to the assumption that a continuously strong identification with the organizational target has a positive impact on the individual and workgroup identification. An emphasis in establishing strong, **depersonalized relationships** and a desire for **uncertainty reduction** appear to create a feeling of stability and security, which allows for engaging with other identification targets.

## 6.2. The Commanding Pattern

Depicted below in *Figure 11*, the Commanding pattern encompasses the journeys of EVS #2 and EVS #4. The unique feature of this pattern is the overall medium identification with the community. Another characteristic of this pattern is the drop in identification with all targets by the end of the program. After being continuously strong until the 2. Phase, the relational identification of the Commanding pattern experiences a decrease to medium towards the end of the program. While the identification with the workgroup target displays a vicissitudinous development, ending up in a weak identification with the EVS group in the 3. Phase, the identification with the organizational target remains rather stable at a medium level without major swings towards either end of the spectrum.

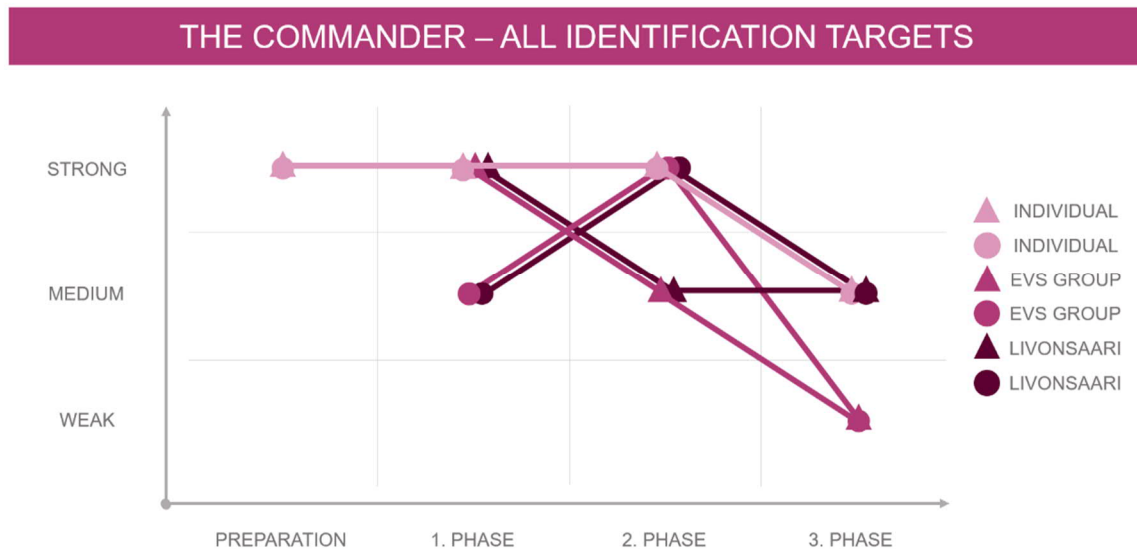


Figure 11 - Identification Dynamics of the Commanding Pattern

The volunteers were my closest access point to Livonsaari, especially when I first arrive in the research setting. In a reflection paper from May 2018, I capture my initial perception of the volunteer dynamics in Livonsaari:

*[...] From my first interactions with the [EVSs], it seems that they have created a little microcosm within the community life of Livonsaari, which I describe as pursuing highly individualistic interests paired with a strong sense of care for other people around, but particularly for the other volunteers. This is based on various observation of the choice of free time activities and non-mandatory tasks. The reason why I use the term individualistic refers to exactly that choice of how the EVS spent their hours after a workday has ended. As far as I have noticed, all of the five volunteers seem to pursue tasks and actions that create pleasure for them. Here, the primary motivation in doing a particular project lays not only in the interaction with other volunteers and community members, but rather in the strong interest in the project itself, where the interaction with others can be seen as a pleasant byproduct of the action itself.*

(Reflection Paper – Anabel Fischer – Volunteers – 23.05.2018)

The observation of the EVS dynamics, which I refer to in the excerpt above, have developed further over the course of the program: for some EVS, this initial snippet turned out to be not entirely accurate over time; for others, these observations have continuously intensified.

In general, we can agree on one thing, the social dynamics of the EVS group have developed into a complex and intertwined web, where different actors try to balance various interests.

For the Commanders, the essence of the excerpt remains coherent throughout the seven months: the primary motivation to pursue tasks lies in the interest in **self-realization** of which social interaction and personalized relationships can be considered a positive byproduct. EVS #2 explains in a succinct statement the main characteristics of the Commanding pattern:

*“It was very nice that I had all the freedom or I was not feeling like I should know something already. Everyone was so kind and explained even the very basic things, which I, of course, needed to have explained. [...] So, no one was testing me, like what do I know.” (#2)*

During their time in Livonsaari, both EVS #2 and #4 display high interest in striving for **self-expansion**, which facilitates to increase personal resources (e.g. knowledge or practical skills) as well as the desire to access other people’s perspective (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010). This resonates with the Commanding pattern, where the identification with all three targets (individual, workgroup and organization) is strongly associated with learning and enlarging personal resources and skills.

This room for autonomy and **self-expansion** is also supported by a statement how one EVS coordinator describes the volunteer management in Livonsaari:

*“They’re adult people [...]. It’s not possible that someone will tell them first [thing] in the morning, where they have to go and who’s friend they have to be and whatever. They have to choose themselves, [...] they are seven months here. They’re volunteers. They [do not have] to do this kind of work, what they don’t really want. Of course, there [is] work that you don’t want to do, but it’s not that you just have to go somewhere because someone [tells] you have to go there. [To the garden], they have to go twice a week.”*

(Interview – Niina – Conversation on EVS – 08.07.2018)



*Image 2 - EVS in the Greenhouse of the Cooperative Garden. Date: 21.05.2018*

After the arrival in Livonsaari factors like (1) the wide range of learning experiences, (2) access to new perspectives on alternative lifestyles and (3) novelty of being a volunteer foster the strong relational identification in the 1. Phase. Another reason for the identification with the individual target seems to stem from (4) the degree of autonomy to design the program according to personal interests:

*“In May, the weather has been fantastic; a lot of walking around, jogging and swimming in the lake or sea. Also, it was about discovering the island, playing Volleyball. It was around that time, where one started to have an idea of who lived where and how what worked – more or less.” (#4)*

The personal field notes of my first trip to the research site support the EVS’s description that Livonsaari is a setting with a high degree of autonomy, a factor that appears to enhance the identification with the individual target. Every time I visited Livonsaari, my sleeping arrangements have been always a surprise factor:

*[...] I moved to Niina’s office [today]. Nobody seems to care where I am, where I sleep, what I do. To clarify, I state this without any valuation. Everybody is super welcoming and always looking after me, but the general attitude that I experience here is "you can do basically whatever you want, make yourself at home, we don't care what you do as long as you are fine with it". This is nice, but since I am so new here and do not belong to any group,*



*I sometimes do not know how to deal with those situations. I am struggling to understand what offers I can expect and which offers are made of courtesy.*

(Daily Recap – Anabel Fischer – 21.05.2018)

What I experience as struggles to make sense of a new social environment seems to be seen as opportunity for **self-expansion** by the Commanding pattern. Over time, this level of freedom develops into an appreciation for the overall setting of Livonsaari. The appreciation for the community and its respective opportunities for the EVS contribute to the overall moderate identification of the Commanders with the organizational target.



*Image 3 - Snapshots from Free Time Activities of the EVS in Livonsaari. Date: May 2018 & September 2018*

In addition, the high emphasis on **self-expansion** leads to the assumption that the Commanding pattern exhibits a tendency of an **individualist self-concept orientation**. This is also in line with Cooper & Thatcher's (2010) suggestion that individualism is linked to a "neutral" state of identification, which results in neither identification nor a lack of identification with an organization. For the case of the Commanding pattern, this is true as both EVSs do not identify with the community per se but rather with the individual opportunities that result from the experience of staying in Livonsaari. Their individual association with the program and their role of being a volunteer becomes the core identification of the Commanders.

To quote an example that is in line with my observations and statements in the final interview, EVS #2 views Livonsaari as space to learn and find inspiration. However, it seems

highly likely that EVS #2 would change settings when #2 was to find a similar space, which provided the same degree of autonomy as Livonsaari. The identification with Livonsaari is based on the degree of autonomy to pursue own interests rather than to become a part of and shape the community.

We can spot a dominant difference between EVS #2 and #4 in how they perceive the temporality of the program, which becomes visible in the sense-making of available time for exploiting opportunities during the volunteer program. From the moment, EVS #4 applies for the volunteering program, #4 considers the factor time in Livonsaari as limited, always keeping the finish line in mind. There is a clear intention to return to a life back home after the end of the program. Thus, it stands to reason that EVS #4 defines this experience for **self-realization** to the duration of seven months:

*“It is a shame that there are only seven months in Livonsaari and if I start already now to focus on my future plans, then effectively I would not have seven but only five months.” (#4)*

In contrast, for EVS #2, the experiences gained in Livonsaari seem to be less timely bound. Temporality plays a role for the workgroup identification as the volunteering program ends after the seven months, yet the access to new knowledge, skills and personal development has just started for EVS #2.

Based on what we have learned about the Commanders until now, we can assume that their decision-making processes generally prioritize personal interests and **self-realization** over socialization and establishing deep relationships. Cooper & Thatcher (2010) state that people with individualist self-concept orientation rather avoid **personalized belongingness**, as the high need for autonomy outweighs the need to establish relationships with others. This applies to some extent for both EVS of the Commanding pattern and becomes visible in how they handle their relationships during their time in Livonsaari. Throughout the program, EVS #2 and #4 seem to establish relationships not only by interpersonal fit, but mainly by the fruits that can be harvested from that relationship. This tendency is more dominant for EVS #4 than for EVS #2. In a statement, EVS #4 reflects on one's attitude towards **personalized belongingness** with the workgroup:

*“Of course, that is intense. When you have a close relationship with one person, it becomes more difficult to connect with the other EVS. I am pretty sure that it is impossible to establish deep relationships with other EVS when you are already so close with someone in this group.” (#4)*

The evaluation of benefits is present in decision-making processes of the Commanders. The first priority are personal interests followed by maintaining relationship that allow access to personal benefits. Only on third instance are common interests taken into consideration. This behavior intensifies in the 3. Phase when the program comes to an end and the only way to deal with interpersonal and intergroup tensions is sheer ignorance.

After delving in the dynamics that drive identification of the Commanding pattern, let us take a step back to look at its overall development. While the identification with individual and organizational targets depict only small changes, moving between a strong or medium level, the identification with the workgroup target can be described as volatile, displaying drops from strong to weak.

The varying workgroup identification allow for a loop to the initial observation, which describe the EVS’ microcosm as bunch of individuals with common interests. The connectedness that is created not only through sharing a living space, but more importantly through sharing the experience in Livonsaari. The motivation generates a vast energy among the EVS group to bring forward common projects and leave a memorable mark in the community. I recall one moment in May, sitting in front of Alitalo and watching the EVS interact:

*A lot of this energy is driven by the volunteers and the longer I stay here, the more I enjoy [the camp fire spot]. The other day, while I sat at the fireplace, #5, #4 and #1 met in front of the house and filled each other in on their different morning tasks. It was a short conversation, but within those few sentences, I could almost feel the thirst for planning more activities in the afternoon. It almost seemed like a check and balance system, where the updating process is a tool to show what each one has achieved during the day and at the same time a motivation for further activities.*

(Reflection Paper – Anabel Fischer – Volunteers – 23.05.2018)

In the beginning of the program, those common interests of the EVS group (except for EVS #3) facilitate and even amplify the learning experience of each individual EVS. However,

over time, the well-functioning dynamics of the workgroup drift apart. In the final interview, EVS #4 aims to find an explanation for this development:

*“When EVS #3 acts as the odd one out, you realize how it draws the other four [EVS] closer together. Towards the end, when the odd one tries harder to not cause trouble all the time, even apologizes for issues in the past, it is interesting to see that tensions arise among other EVS. Of course, it is impossible to hold hands and be happy all the time; there will always be some sort of conflicts. But it is interesting that now the tensions are distributed among the rest of us. In the beginning, they were a reason why we were so close.” (#4)*

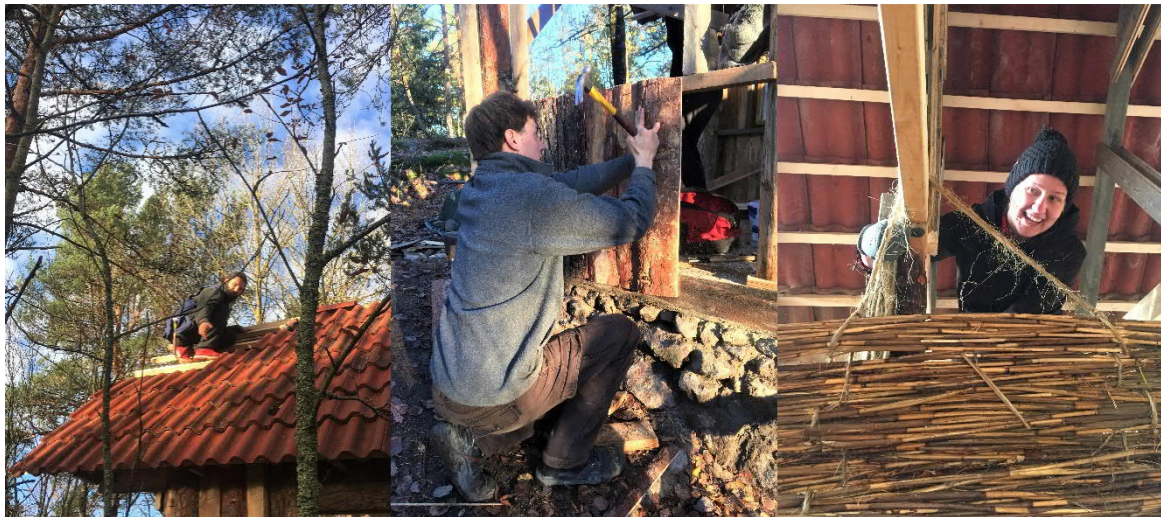
Due to the nature of the EVS voluntary program, the workgroup is inevitably connected to the learning experience during the program. Even though the EVS have a wide range of choices to pursue own projects, the group is bound together by the voluntary duties that are part of the seven months program. Consequently, the workgroup and the striving for **self-realization** appear to be intertwined.

While initially complementing and supporting each other with projects within their little microcosm, self-centered behavior and individualistic attitude provide room for tensions over time. EVS #2 describes the accumulation of tensions with the example of a toilet construction as EVS project. After an initial proposition of the EVS group to construct an outhouse for the farmland of the cooperative garden, community members support the project through advice or information about materials. However, the major decisions are taken collectively among the EVS, which are rewarded when in June, the EVS group finishes their “*first compost toilet*”. EVS #2 explains that “*it was this beautiful wooden [one] from whatever wood we had from the community. [...] And there is a beautiful heart on the doors.*” Even though the compost toilet is a successful EVS project, the priorities for EVS #4 lie not in the common construction but in personal intentions as described by EVS #2:

*“And then, #4 fell in love with the construction. So, Jesse asked for a compost toilet and we were planning to do it all together. But, then, somehow, #4 just started and wanted to finish alone, only with EVS #5. It was a nice project which we could have worked together again because it joined us again.” (#2)*



By the end of the program, particularly the social dynamics of the workgroup limit the ability to enlarge the access to resources, which explains the overall decrease towards all targets (individual, workgroup and organization). In summary, the setting of Livonsaari and the timeframe of the program seem to provide enough room for **self-expansion**, which is linked to the high level of autonomy for the volunteers' decision-making processes. The degree of autonomy supports the identification with the individual target. For the organizational target, it simultaneously fosters appreciation, which is translated in a moderate level of identification. However, interpersonal tensions within the workgroup target are likely to counteract the effects of autonomy for all three targets.



*Image 4 - EVS Toilet Construction. Date: 26.10.2019*

After the examination of the commanding pattern, it seems just to assume that despite a continuously moderate identification with the organizational target, an unstable workgroup identification impinges on initial strong identification with the individual target towards the end of the program. Due to the nature of the seven months volunteer program, the learning experience of individuals is closely connected to the functioning of the workgroup target. This leads to the assumption that a volatile identification with the workgroup target tends to diminish the potential of **self-realization**, which contributes to a decrease of a strong individual identification towards the end of the program.

### **6.3. The Caregiving Pattern**

The Livonsaari journeys of the two volunteers #1 and #5 are included in the Caregiving pattern, which is displayed in *Figure 12* below. The unique characteristics of this pattern is

shaped by the gradual decline of the identification level towards the three identification targets by the end of the program.

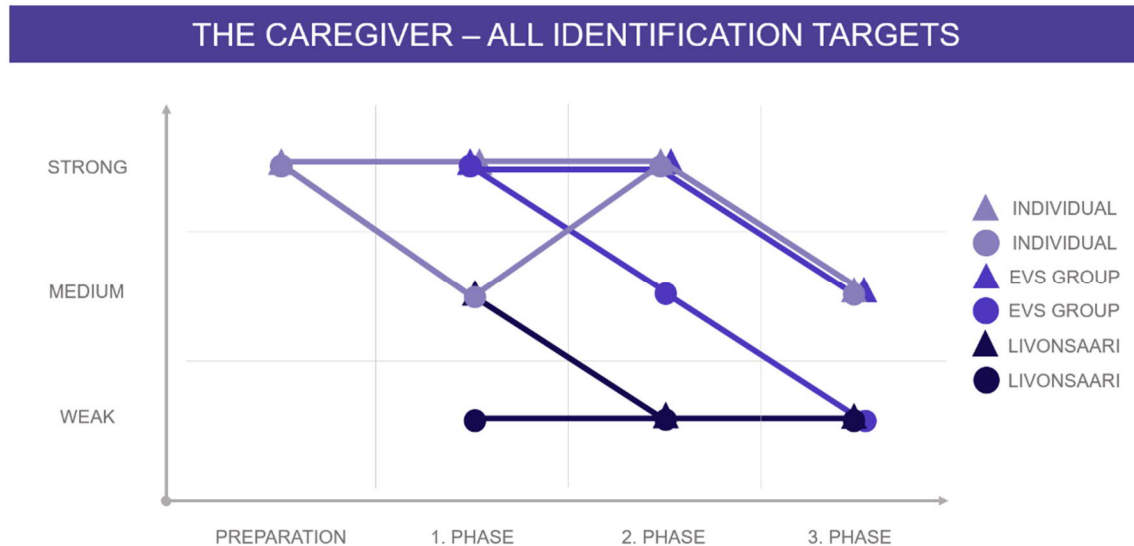


Figure 12 - The Identification Dynamics of the Caregiving Pattern

The Caregiving pattern shows an overall weak identification with the organizational target. EVS #5 shows a medium identification towards the community in the 1. Phase, which decreases shortly after to a weak level. The workgroup target experiences strong identification in the beginning of the program and gradually declines as the program proceeds. The identification with the individual target for the Caregivers fluctuates between a strong and medium level and slides from a strong level in the 2. Phase with a medium level by the end of the program.

In the Commanding pattern, we touched upon the excerpt that describes the microcosm of the EVS as conglomerate of individualistic characters with common interests. The Caregiving pattern is a great example that demonstrates how my initial observations were only partly accurate. After we dove into the motivation and driving forces for identification of the Dutiful and the Commanding pattern, the following section delves into the dynamics of the Caregiving pattern. At the same time, this finding section highlights the complexity of the entire EVS dynamics.

*“There were not really very many meaningful interactions with anyone else, and this is what makes me a little bit sad, because it really comes down to the people for me in the end.” (#1)*

The statement of EVS #1 allows for a first hunch on the identification drivers of the Caregiving pattern: EVS #1 and #5 seem to generate meaning through **personalized relationships**, which in turn serves as main source of identification with any of the three targets (individual, workgroup and organizational). This behavior is visible, for example, in the strong workgroup identification when the program starts, which is also supported by observations from my first visit in the community in May 2018. The atmosphere in Alitalo is shaped by the togetherness and relatedness of the volunteers among each other (especially #1, #2, #4 and #5). It appears that within a short period, those four individuals have established dynamics of collective decision-making process within their workgroup; they see themselves as an international family rather than a group of stranger that has just recently met.

The sense-making of the new environment takes place through the identification with the workgroup target, which both EVS #1 and #5 exhibit by referring to the EVS group as “we”. The importance of the EVS group for the Caregivers is also expressed in a statement by #5:

*“In April, there was still the best party that we had here. We celebrated #2’s and #4’s birthday. [...] It was one evening, we came from the sauna. Then we start drinking beers and smoking a funky cigarette. And then we just danced and we went to bed at 03.00 or 04.00 [in the morning]. It’s still the best evening that I had, I danced so much. It was spontaneous and I think it was the first time that we spent an evening together and it was really, really funny.” (#5)*

This quote highlights the intensity of the EVS program, which assembles five strangers and requires them instantly to make sense of their new role as volunteers. This sense-making process of the Caregivers reflects how Ashforth et al. (2011) describe the creation of a collective identity. This formation process takes place in the transition from intra-subjective (individual level) to the intersubjective (collective level). By shifting from terms like “I” to “we” and “us” already in the 1. Phase of the program, the Caregivers forms a level of social identity by identifying themselves as part of the workgroup target. The workgroup target becomes the core identification within the nested identities.

Through the emphasis on seeking identification through relatedness with others, the Caregiving pattern displays features of a **relationist self-concept orientation**. According to

Cooper & Thatcher (2010), this orientation states that the individual views the self as connected to others through relationships. This is supported by the tendency of the Caregivers to identify strongly with specific relationships (e.g. coworkers and other individuals), which remains strong or medium throughout the volunteering program. Furthermore, Cooper & Thatcher (2010) suggest that individuals with relationist orientation are unlikely to identify with larger group or organizations, which is particularly visible in the weak identification towards the organizational target.

The individuals of the Caregiving pattern display a desire for **personalized belongingness**, which Cooper & Thatcher (2010) describe as valuing connectedness with others. Furthermore, the authors state that by focusing on personalized relationships, individuals feel rewarded through providing support to important others. This is coherent with the behavior of the Caregivers as one of the most important source of energy lies in establishing meaningful relationships. The following statement of EVS #1 exemplifies how the connection with other people (in this case the EVS group) goes beyond simply sharing a living space together:

*“Concerning the work itself and the life here, it was [...] amazing that we were living together in a single house. We, the EVS, and some other people, but I think that the community experience mostly for us came from this. [...] Because it was not really just being roommates. That was one part of it, but we were working together every day, not always together on the same project, but we still needed to coordinate who would do what within our group.” (#1)*

Within the pattern, the Caregivers notably differentiate themselves in the prioritization of targets to find meaning and identification with the other EVS. While EVS #5 aims to establish meaningful relationship with the most proximal people: the other volunteers (workgroup target), EVS #1 seems to appreciate any personal interaction that breaks the surface – no matter with whom this interaction is shared (individual and workgroup targets). This striving to find deep connections with individuals possibly leads to a higher degree of vulnerability as it creates a dependency on others to find meaning. To exemplify this dependency, I captured the following observation from #1’s graduation party (see also *Figure 13* below):

*Back at Alitalo, the EVS are fully engaged in the party preparation. Together with Niklas (a person that seems to be able to find everything what you wish for), #4 and #1 have gathered a variety of colorful and funky looking decorative materials. Filip, who works for Niina's Seppo, puts up a UV light installation right in front of Alitalo. #1 is excited about the party, at the same time a little worried about the willingness of people to show up. It is #1's event: #1 initiated the party, #1 wants to celebrate #1's graduation with the community members.*

(Reflection Paper – Anabel Fischer – Open Day – 30.08.2018)



*Image 5 - Camp Fire Scene during #1's Graduation Party. Date: 19.05.2018*

Let us loop back to the overall identification targets: while the identification with the workgroup target starts strong, the identification with the organizational target of the Caregiving pattern can be described as continuously weak. In order to better understand the process with the organizational target, it is necessary to take the general setting of Livonsaari into consideration. As previously stated, Livonsaari is a setting that displays loose social structures, which leads to the presumption that this particular setting might not be ideal to establish strong personalized relationships. This presumption requires a little delving into the history of the community. Let me explain this by providing some personal thoughts, which were captured after a conversation with a community member in July 2018:

*The evening in the palio (= hot tub) made me think a lot about friendships and internal structures of the community. When I was sitting with Sari and Tiina in the palio, I could clearly understand what Niina had mentioned before about joining the community as an outsider, a newcomer. There seems to be a strong bond of friendship that connects the founding members. Perhaps it is necessary to dive deeper into the motives of being part of this community in the first place. The founding idea goes back to a group of friends from*



*college that would hate to see their individual paths separating. With the common interest in agriculture, they decided to look for a place where they can live together as well as follow their own paths and careers. But while the community develops and grows, people do not join for those initial “founding-reasons” any more, new members of the community are not connected through the bond of friendship, a common past, but through some idea of sharing a living together. I keep asking myself what motives drive newcomers to join a place that has clear, yet unofficial social structures, without sharing a common set of rules or values? I would probably feel very much like an outsider if I had joined the community at a later stage of time.*

(Daily Recap – Anabel Fischer – 10.07.2018)

Despite the unconditional support that the community members share among each other, Livonsaari as organizational entity strongly emphasizes individualistic and autonomous characteristics. A member describes Livonsaari as community of ex-anarchists, which only support the notion of not trying to conform to any societal rules. Thus, when searching meaning through **personalized belongingness**, the depersonalized structures of Livonsaari as organizational target possibly stand in a conflict with a relationist orientation.

Throughout my visits, I experience depersonalized behaviors that are present in the community. In my daily notes, I describe difficulties of grasping the distant behavior of people, with whom I thought I had connected:

*On the second night, I bumped into [Kai] at the sauna in the “Koulu” (School-Building). His reaction was “hello” and nothing more (and we had spent one full evening together drinking beer and talking about life in the community). Similarly, with Teemu: I really thought we had established some sort of relationship during my first visit. At least I had the impression that we came along more or less well. When I saw him the first time, he ignored me, did not even say “hi”. To be honest, I was not even sure if he remembered who I was. Also with Mika, I met him and Melina at the Lidl to do my shopping for my stay in Livonsaari. It was awkward. Maybe it was because of the given situation that both of them didn’t really know where to place me.*

(Overall Recap – Anabel Fischer – 04.-13.07.2018)

For the Caregivers, the difficulties of establishing deeper, meaningful relationships with community members is a possible explanation for the weak identification with the

organizational target, which result in disappointments and unfulfilled expectations. On a personal note, EVS #1 attempts to make sense of the community's perception of the volunteers:

*"In certain parts of this experience, I realized that for us this is an extremely intense period of our lives; when we are away from our homes and learning things every day, meeting new people. And for people living here, **we're just somebody**."* (#1)

Besides the striving for creating meaningful relationships, another source for identification for the Caregivers is the striving for **uncertainty reduction**. Cooper & Thatcher (2010) state that **uncertainty reduction** is linked to an increased commitment to current relationships. Furthermore, a stable environment is preferred to maintain existing relationships. This corresponds on the one hand with the initial strong identification with the workgroup target and at the same time provides a possible explanation for the weak organizational identification. It appears that the setting of Livonsaari does not provide the required level of stability that the Caregivers seek. To quote an example, EVS #5 describes the volatile, "unorganized" social structures of Livonsaari through the volunteers' work setup:

*"We start to work with someone. Then we didn't finish in this day. When we can continue, we didn't know because if [someone had] already prepared a schedule, you don't know on which day you can help. [...] It was all the time: 'Yeah. You need to go to Niina or [to] this working meeting'."* (#5)

Caregivers invest their energy into establishing relationships with most accessible individuals – the other EVS. The instant connection with the EVS as well as the highly individualized setting of Livonsaari seem to hinder an identification with the organizational target.

A unique feature of the Caregiving pattern is the continuously declining identification, particularly visible in the dynamics of individual and workgroup targets. As mentioned before, the strongest source of identification for the Caregivers lies in establishing personalized relationships. As time passes, the intensity of living together and sharing this experience combined with diverging personal interests within the workgroup puts stress on the EVS dynamics. While in the initial phase of the program, Livonsaari is all about being

part of the EVS group, from May onwards, each volunteer increasingly pursues personal interests rather than keeping the well-being of the EVS group as priority.

*“We were having vacation from May on, [...] exchanging. We were not all there anymore at all, and I’m the one who was missing the most.”*

(#1)

Interpersonal tensions as well as lacking common interest and projects result in a constant decrease of identification with the workgroup target. By the end of the program, a touch of resignation is coupled with the concern of preparing a life after the time in Livonsaari leaves little energy to invest in maintaining the relationships (or solving conflicts) with the fellow volunteers.

As the identification with the workgroup target fails to fulfill desired expectations, the Caregivers also identify strongly with the opportunities that result from being part of this volunteer program. Creating meaningful relationship is closely linked to the attainment of new perspectives in life and personal development through the interaction with others (Cooper & Thatcher, 2010). Both EVS #1 and #5 use connections with individuals to expand their horizon and develop their personality, which is coherent with Cooper & Thatcher’s (2010) description of **self-expansion**. For individuals with relationist orientation, **self-expansion** refers to a desire to access new perspectives through building relationships with others. While the rather strong identification with the individual target indicates a fulfilling result of seeking **self-expansion** in Livonsaari, it crystalizes over the course of the program that the quality of relationships is more important than the aspect of **self-realization**. We can speculate that if the relationship per se is not meaningful, the benefits and learnings accessed through this relationship also become less valuable. EVS #5 provides an example how interpersonal compatibility differs from common interests:

*“Riika (community member) - all her knowledge about permaculture was for me very nice, [...] because I am also interested in permaculture, but maybe her character is not really [...].” (#5)*

After examining the findings of the Caregiving pattern, we can infer that an inability to establish personalized relationships over the course of a seven-month voluntary program negatively affects the identification process and thus serves as possible explanation for the visible decline towards all targets by the end of the program.



The examination of the Caregiving pattern leads to the assumption that when strong initial identifications with individual and workgroup targets are based primarily on personalized and meaningful relationships, a declining trend towards those two targets is likely when the organizational identification is continuously weak throughout the program. The desire for **uncertainty reduction** and relatedness as means to find stability and meaning in a new environment seems not achievable in a seven months program. Thus, in an autonomously structured social setting (like CBE Livonsaari), it appears to be difficult to identify through personalized relationships over time.

## **7. DISCUSSION: THREE KEY THEORETICAL INSIGHTS FROM CROSS PATTERN EXAMINATION**

In the previous sections, the three patterns have been examined exclusively within each identification pattern and the derived propositions are based on the respective findings section (Dutiful, Commanding and Caregiving pattern). In the following excerpt, we examine the propositions across the three patterns, which firstly serves to test the propositions' soundness towards each other and secondly allows for more universal statements about the implications of the respective propositions.

The probably most dominantly visible difference between the three patterns is the overall trend in the identification development: The Dutiful pattern displays an increase in identification over time while the Commanding and Caregiving pattern depict a declining trend towards the end of the program.

Let us start by directing the focus on the Dutiful pattern. The derived proposition suggests that a continuously strong identification with the organizational target creates a secure space for engaging with all targets over time. As this continuously strong identification with the community is only visible in the Dutiful pattern, it seems reasonable to assume that the distinct organizational identification might be a reason for positive development of the individual and workgroup target over time.

With its constantly weak organizational identification and overall declining trend, the Caregiving pattern presents an opposition to the Dutiful pattern. When we examine those two patterns more closely, we can spot that both display a similar desire for **uncertainty**

**reduction.** However, this similarity differs in the way, how both patterns aim to achieve a reduction of uncertainty when arriving in Livonsaari. While the Caregivers seek a feeling of stability in the identification with the workgroup target, the Duty-Fulfiller identifies immediately with the organizational target.

In regard to **uncertainty reduction**, we can back the proposition that a strong identification with the organizational target has a positive effect on the overall process and a weak organizational identification seems to lead to a drop in identification with all targets. Even though the Commanding pattern also indicates a declining identification trend, it does not rebut the proposition, as the Commanders do not visibly strive for **uncertainty reduction**. In summary, it seems likely that in a setting of Livonsaari, a successful pursuit for **uncertainty reduction** can only be achieved through a constantly strong organizational identification.

The quest for finding belongingness provides another possible reason why a strong organizational identification appears to have a positive effect on identifying with other targets. While the Dutiful pattern seeks association through strong depersonalized relationships with the community members, the Caregivers find meaning and stability through establishing personal, deep relationships with the people around them. In a timely limited program paired with a general setting in Livonsaari, which can be described as rather distant, individualistic with connections that are rather action-based than emotional, it seems challenging to establish this feeling of **personalized belongingness**.

As we learned in the previous section, upon the arrival in Livonsaari, the Caregiving pattern uses a collective sense-making approach by connecting to individuals, particularly to the EVS group, which serve as major source for finding belonging in Livonsaari. Over the course of the program, the tight connection to the other volunteers has led to disappointments after the group starts to drift apart. This is translated in the derived proposition for the Caregiving pattern, which states that *“in an autonomously structured social setting, it appears to be difficult to identify through personalized relationships over time”*. After contrasting the Caregiving and the Dutiful pattern, we find support for both propositions as it seems that in a temporal setting, the chances of experiencing negative sentiments (e.g. disappointments) through unmet expectations towards relationships are higher when those relationships are based on personalized rather than on depersonalized connections. Here, the

Commanding pattern does not rebut the proposition of the Dutiful pattern either, as both patterns display entirely different identification paths and are rather independent from each other. After a cross-pattern examination, we can conclude that the proposition of the Dutiful pattern appears to be sound in comparison with the other two patterns.

After delving into the pattern, which depicted a positive identification development, we now turn our attention to a comparison of those patterns that both display a general decrease in identification by the end of the program: the Commanding and the Caregiving pattern. Besides a generally declining trend, both patterns also develop similarly on the individual identification paths. A notable difference can be spotted in the identification with the workgroup and the organizational target. In contrast to the Caregivers, the Commanding pattern exhibits a medium identification with the organizational target, which derives from the appreciation to autonomously shape this volunteer experience. The previously derived proposition of the Commanding pattern states that the setting of Livonsaari provides an enabling environment for pursuing **self-realization**, which is particularly reflected in the initially potent individual identification. Our findings suggest that tensions in the workgroup hinder the positive effects of the autonomy and opportunities of **self-expansion**. Since the Caregivers as well as the Commanders display a decreasing trend, it seems possible that the two patterns impinge on each other. For the Caregivers this is visible in the unmet expectation through self-centered behavior and attitudes of the Commanders, resulting in negative sentiments. In contrast, the Commanders face an inability to pursue **self-realization** due to malfunction of the EVS group.

This mutual dependency appears to put additional pressure on the EVS dynamics, as the workgroup target has to balance and comprise a wide range of interests as well as responsibilities. A Caregiver reflects on the challenges of the workgroup dynamics:

*“It was also coordination among ourselves, [...] how to make decisions on things together, keeping it constructive and being able to have complaints, but still make do somehow. [...] I felt [the EVS group] very close, because we lived together and it was a really difficult dynamic – and a big learning process also, I suppose. [...]” (#1)*

The statement supports the difficulties of coordinating the complex dynamics, which become especially challenging, as the volunteers hold no stake to influence the group setup, which is determined under the umbrella of the EVS program in Livonsaari.

At this point, it is necessary to delve deeper into the nature of workgroup dynamics. Due to the structure of the volunteer program (timely limited and intense), the Caregivers and Commanders identify instantly with the EVS group. What the volunteers of those patterns do not realize in the beginning is that their motivation to identify with this target differs from one another: while the Caregivers identify with the EVS group through personalized relationships, the Commanders see the EVS group as means to an end (depersonalized relationships). In this initial process, the four EVS form a social reality for their experience in Livonsaari<sup>8</sup>. However, the instant identification with the workgroup does not provide the necessary space to formulate the underlying expectations of each pattern, which differ distinctly from one another. While the Commanders and Caregivers form a social reality within their EVS microcosm, they fail to see that this reality is not based on the “same” parameters and expectations (see Ashforth et al., 2011).

The comparison of the two patterns backs the proposition of the Commanding pattern that during the seven months program in Livonsaari, the individual identification target appears tightly connected to the functioning of the workgroup target. Here, the Commanders take over the position as players who actively shape the workgroup dynamics according to their personal views. As the Commanders become limited in shaping the volunteer experience in accordance with their objectives, it therefore seems reasonable to assume that interpersonal tensions impinge on the positive effects of **self-expansion** and pursuing personal development. Conversely, the individualistic behavior of the Commanding pattern appears to negatively affect the overall identification of the Caregiving pattern. The Caregivers’ priority lies in finding identification in **personalized belongingness** with the EVS group. This seems to position them in a passive role, making them even more dependent on the actions of the Commanders.

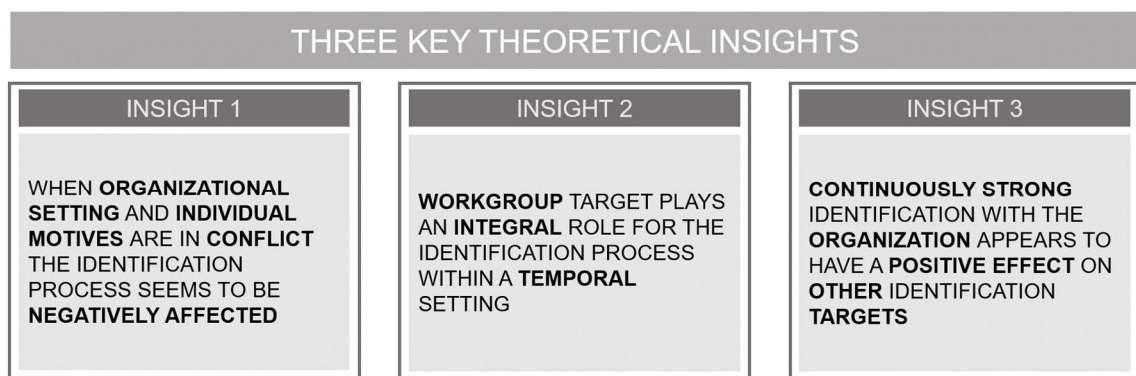
To conclude the testing of the propositions, we can assume that in the timely limited setting of Livonsaari, relational or personalized collective identification (e.g. workgroup) exhibits a

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<sup>8</sup> Arguments for this are found in the terminology use of “we”ness and overall sense-making as soon as the EVS arrive in Livonsaari; also see description of the birthday party in the findings section

higher possibility of a decreasing identification with all targets over time. This finding is indirectly justified by the positive development of the Dutiful pattern, which establishes its strong core identification on the organizational targets instead of workgroup or coworkers.

Through the cross pattern examination, we gained three major insights which are displayed below in *Figure 13*. First, the identification process seems to be negatively affected when an organizational setting does not enable individuals to pursue their identification motives within a given timeframe. Second, the connection between Commanding and Caregiving pattern leads to the assumption that the workgroup target plays an integral role in the identification process within a temporal setting. Third, the cross pattern examination confirmed the proposition of the Dutiful Pattern, which states that a continuously strong identification with the organizational target appears to have a positive effect on other targets.



*Figure 13 - Overview of the three major insights after the cross pattern examination*

In the subsequent paragraphs, we examine the above mentioned insights in more detail and put them into perspective with existing literature.

## 7.1. Connection between Individual Motives and Organizational Setting

The first insight from the cross pattern examination deals with the interplay between individual motives and the overall organizational setting. Embedded in the overall setting of Livonsaari, which can be described as autonomous and full of opportunities that wait to be explored, the Commanding pattern demonstrates an overall medium identification with the community with an individual core identification. Similarly, as the identification with the community is the core for the Duty Fulfiller, we can assume that the organizational environment and personal motives are in line. This is coherent with the continuously strong connection to the community.

Ashforth et al. (2011) suggest that the unique and continuous aspects of nested entities in organizations tend to take the same shape across different levels, which is linked to the influence of lower-order entities on the identities of higher-order entities, and vice versa (Ashforth et al., 2011). While the Commanding and Duty-Fulfilling patterns show tendencies of this identity behavior, our findings suggest that this reciprocal relationship of higher and lower entities does not correspond with the Caregiving pattern.

Nested in the intermediary level, tugged in between organizational and individual target, it appears that the Caregivers with the workgroup as core identification display the biggest struggles to successfully identify with the community. Based on our findings, it is reasonable to assume that those struggles might be related to the inability of the Caregivers to fulfill their identification motives. Due to their institutionalized position, Ashforth et al. (2011) describe a cascading effects of nested identities, where changes in higher-level identities over time drip down to other levels. This cascading effect does not seem to take place here as the Caregivers do not identify with the organizational target, which might hinder the overall identification process with other targets. Let us dive in possible reasons for the malfunction of the cascading effect.

The most important motive of the Caregivers is to find **personalized belongingness**, which appears to be difficult to achieve in the setting of Livonsaari. While the Caregivers are still able to find **self-expansion**, inspiration and learning through the identification with workgroup and individual targets, meaningful and deep relatedness fall by the wayside over the course of the program. There seems to be a fundamental difference in what the Caregivers seek compared with what Livonsaari has to offer. One possible explanation can be derived when considering cultural components (see Research Context: Finnish culture). Another explanation could be drawn from the factor of temporality. It is possible that the overall organizational structure, which we describe as loose and autonomous, does not allow for **personalized belongingness** over a period of seven months. Most likely, both factors have an influence that the Caregivers fail to achieve their motives.

In summary, it seems fair to say that identification processes experience a positive effect when the overall setting of an organization and the motives of an individual are in line. Conversely, the identification process is negatively affected when the setting does not enable the individuals to pursue their motives.

## 7.2. Importance of the Workgroup Target

The second key insight suggests that the workgroup target plays an overarching factor for the identification process of volunteers in a timely limited setting. This insight is based particularly on the interlinkage between the Caregiving and Commanding patterns. As both patterns hold either the workgroup or individual target as core identification, it is conclusive that the core identification for both patterns is not the organizational target.

In the autonomous social structures of Livonsaari paired with a limited time available in the organization, it seems that the volunteers remain outsiders for the time being in Livonsaari. This is supported by the observation of previous EVS volunteers who decided to stay and become part of the community. To quote an example, after years in Livonsaari, one former EVS still rather identifies oneself with the role of being an EVS than being a member of the community.

Soviana (2014) identifies that despite sustainable performance and long-term existence, CBEs are fragile systems and often have to balance internal dynamics with influence from outsiders (non-community members). The EVS as organized, timely limited addition to the community fall somewhere in between a definition of members and outsiders. The term “EVS” labels the volunteers as a temporal contribution to the community. This labelling already takes place prior to their arrival and remains present throughout the seven months. For the community, the EVS present a temporal workforce and through the shared living in Alitalo, the EVS are defined as separate, collective entity that temporarily resides in Livonsaari. EVS #1 reflects on the perception of community members towards the EVS in the final interview that *“for the community we are just someone”*.

However, this temporal label is also reinforced by the self-definition of the EVS. EVS #4 describes that *“in the seven months it is not possible to get to know everyone here – there are too many people here. If there were ten people in the community, then perhaps that’s possible, but not with 40.”*

It appears that the temporal nature of the EVS program binds the volunteers to the workgroup target – whether they identify with this target or not. This is also supported by how the Caregivers and Commanders perceive the Duty-Fulfiller: Even though EVS #3 demonstrates an obvious distancing from the volunteer group, three out of four other EVS consider EVS #3 as a part of their closest connections in Livonsaari. To the interview question who the

EVS consider their closest connection in the community, EVS #1 states that *“I would say for sure #2, #5, #4, and also #3 in his way, [...] I would say this was my closest [connection to the] community.”*

The label of being a timely limited addition to community is also expressed the community perceives and speak of the volunteers as a collective entity<sup>9</sup>. Based on the label of the community members as well as through a self-definition, it seems just to say that unless the volunteers put great efforts to withdrawing themselves from the workgroup target (see Duty-Fulfiller), the factor of temporality binds the EVS to the workgroup. As the workgroup target appears to play a fundamental role in the identification process for EVS volunteers, the question arises in which ways the workgroup affects this process process.

As discussed before, the inability of the Caregivers to establish deep and meaningful relationship with the other EVS seems to pay its dues on the workgroup as core identification. Interestingly, despite the individual core identification of the Commanding patter, it appears that both patterns are similarly affected by the well-being of the workgroup target, if they do not hold an organizational core identification.

Ashforth et al. (2011) suggest that the formation of an intersubjective (“we think”) and institutionalized subjective (“it is”) of a given collective influences and is influenced by the constructions of other collectives. Besides the role of temporality as amplification of the workgroup dependency, the findings of Ashforth et al. (2011) may explain the interdependent workgroup dynamics. The initial formation of a common social reality as part of the EVS group (1. Phase) turns out to be not coherent for the two patterns. While the EVS almost immediately reach an intersubjective identification level, the discord of social realities seems to be a hindrance to forming an institutionalized subjective for the time being in Livonsaari (unlike the Duty-Fulfiller).

*“When one of the group acts as the odd one out, you realize how it draws the other four [EVS] closer together”* is how EVS #4 describes the dynamics of the EVS collective is affected by “outsiders”. #4 continues that *“it is interesting that now the tensions are*

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<sup>9</sup> To quote an example, Toppi’s description of hardworking EVS, which I captured in my reflection paper: *When I spend the day with Toppi in his garden, he mentioned that **this group of EVS volunteers** was extremely proactive and engaged in tasks around the community - I did not even have to ask him for that information.*

(Reflection Paper – Anabel Fischer – Volunteers – 23.05.2018)



*distributed among the rest of us. In the beginning, they were a reason why we were so close” (#4).*

The inability to form an institutionalized reality could be seen as threat for the ability to reduce uncertainty. Particularly the Caregivers strive for a feeling of stability, which is difficult to achieve in a workgroup that is required to balance a wide range of individual motives.

The workgroup interconnectedness between the Commanding and Caregiving patterns appears to be related to the factor of temporality, which labels the EVS as a temporal collective within a larger setting. As the EVS seem to be bound to the workgroup, we can conclude that the workgroup target plays a fundamental role in the identification process of the volunteers (especially Commander and Caregiver). The examination of the workgroup target for the identification process, leads us now to the implications of the organizational target.

### **7.3. The Organization as Instant Institutionalized Reality**

Ashforth et al. (2011) describe that the formation of a nested identity takes place in the development from intra-subjective to intersubjective (from “I think” to “we think”). This description is interesting when we look at the identification dynamics of the Duty-Fulfiller. The Dutiful pattern is not only unique as it displays a positive identification trend towards the end of the program, it also stands out as the Duty-Fulfiller identifies continuously strong with the community Livonsaari.

Instead of transitioning from intra-subjective to intersubjective to form a collective identity, which over time develops into a generic subjective, the Dutiful pattern, seems to instantly generate an institutionalized subjective identity, within which EVS #3 adopts the prevailing meaning, values and sense-making processes of the community for oneself. The instant and continuously strong identification with the organizational target strengthens the generic subjective, which in turn dominates the embedded intra-subjective and intersubjective constructions (see: Ashforth et al., 2011). The connection between the nested constructions provides an explanation for the positive identification trend of the Dutiful pattern in the end of the program.

In previous sections, we examined the role of the workgroup on the overall identification process and how tensions in the dynamics impinge on this process. While the Commanders and Caregivers appear to be likewise affected by those tensions, the question arises why those tensions seem to be not affecting the Duty-Fulfiller.

An important motive of the Dutiful pattern lies in the desire for stability and security. By immediately making sense of the volunteer experience through identifying oneself with the organization, the Duty-Fulfiller manages to withdraw oneself from the effects of the workgroup volatility.

Livonsaari is a special place, which EVS #2 illustrates like “*you cannot really imagine this place without seeing it yourself*”. My observations confirm this description. With every new visit, I needed a day or two to adjust to the setting and social “etiquette”. Pairing the findings of the identification behavior of the other four EVS with my personal experiences, it seems fair to say that in order to instantly and wholeheartedly form a generic subjective construction through an identification with the organizational target, it requires a certain personality type. For the Dutiful pattern this might be linked to a dominant form of collectivist self-concept orientation (see: Cooper & Thatcher, 2010).

For the Duty-Fulfiller, an organizational identification allows for stability to make sense of a new situation. Over time, this stability allows for learning new skills and fostering personal development. In turn, those learnings appear to enable the Duty-Fulfiller to engage with other targets towards the end of the program. The displayed dynamics of the Duty-Fulfiller, allow for the converse assumption that in a temporal setting, it seems more likely that volunteers do NOT immediately identify with the organizational target (4 out of 5 do not have the organization as core identification target).

As we learned in previous sections, the EVS group membership amplifies how the EVS are perceived in Livonsaari (self-assigned and assigned by others). Throughout the program, they remain (more or less) well-liked outsiders. While the strong organizational identification appears to provide a constant degree of stability, allowing for engagement with other targets, the core identification with other targets seems to lead to volatile and uncertain EVS workgroup dynamics. A reason for that might be the wide range of individual motives encompassed within the workgroup target. Additionally, the unpredictability of volunteer

personalities within the group pressures the work dynamics. The EVS are not connected by choice but through EVS coordinators and the program itself.

In summary, it seems coherent that continuously strong identification with the organizational target appears to have a positive aspect on other identification targets. However, as this instantaneous identification is only visible with one out of five volunteers, the workgroup target appears to have a more influential power to shape those identification dynamics.

Through the examination of the three major insights, we discovered that personal characteristics and individual motives strongly shape the identification dynamics within a timely limited setting. In the subsequent section, we link our findings to the works of Cooper & Thatcher (2010) and Ashforth et al. (2011) and provide new theoretical implications for literature on volunteerism and community entrepreneurship.

## **8. IMPLICATIONS FOR RESEARCH**

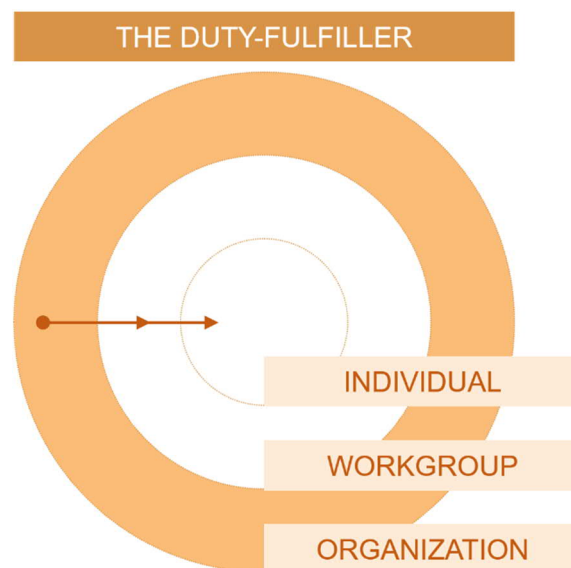
In the following section, we revisit the research question and demonstrate the implications of our findings for the phenomena of volunteerism and community enterprising. Particularly, we provide theoretical insights on temporal nested identification processes. Additionally, our study adds empirical validity to existing theories and contributes to the work of Ashforth et al. (2011) and Cooper & Thatcher (2010) by adding the factor of temporality to their theoretical concepts. Finally, we address the role of volunteer engagement in community enterprises and, based on our findings, suggest practical approaches to enhance the identification process of volunteers in a temporal program.

### **8.1. Temporal Nested Identification Processes in Community Enterprises**

This study seeks to address the research question of how the identification with one specific target (e.g. workgroup) influences the identification with other targets (e.g. organization or individuals) over time. By taking the volunteer lens, we focused particularly on temporal nested identification processes.

One important implication for temporal nested identification dynamics is the role of a core identification. Our findings suggest that the core identification of an individual strongly affects the overall identification process within an organizational setting. Let us take a closer look at what this implies for identification dynamics.

As stated in the findings sections, the collectivist tendencies visible in the behavior and attitudes of the Dutiful pattern suggest that the organizational target represents the pattern's core identification (please refer to *Figure 14*). Supported by our observations, the Duty-Fulfiller instantly adopts an “institutionalized reality” through an organizational identification, confirming the assessment of the core identification. Through this core identification, EVS #3 achieves the desired feeling of stability, which over time seems to positively impact lower-order targets (see: Ashforth et al., 2011). As depicted in *Figure 14*, those dynamics allow for a cascading effect from the organizational, overarching target towards the lower-order targets over the course of a seven-month program. It is to be noted, that achieving an instant institutionalized reality is seldom the case as it usually requires time. Four out of five volunteers do not display generic subjective views for a collective identification target within those seven months.

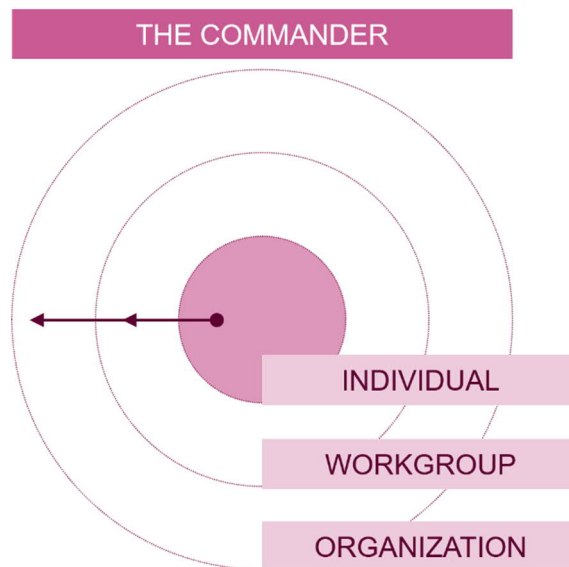


*Figure 14 - The Core Identification of the Duty-Fulfiller*

As discussed before, the workgroup target plays an important role for the identification process in temporal settings, whether self-assigned or assigned by others. The strong association with the organizational target seems to be a viable instrument to distance oneself from the workgroup dependency and facilitate the sense-making process in a new environment.

The Commanders stand out through their primary motivation to pursue tasks connected to **self-realization** of which social interaction and personalized relationships can be considered a positive byproduct. Displaying the individualist self-concept orientation as dominant form,

it seems reasonable to assess individual target as core identification for the Commanders (please refer to *Figure 15*).



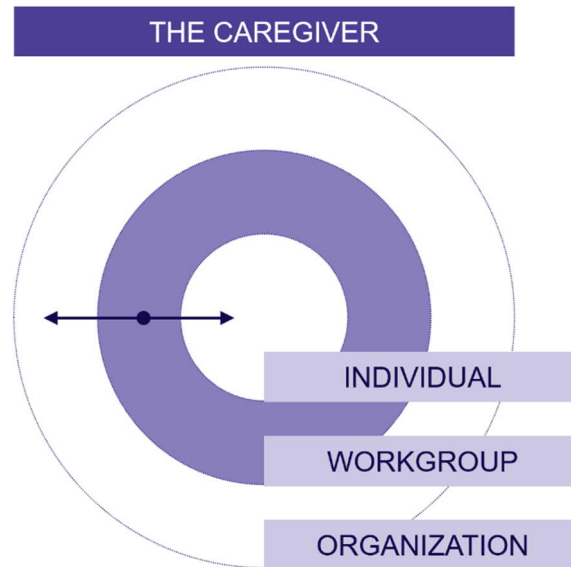
*Figure 15 - The Core Identification of the Commanders*

With the individual core identification, it appears relatively easy to identify with the organizational target as the community serves as enabler to pursue the desired motives (particular focus on **self-expansion**). While the core identification seems to harmoniously connect with the values and structures of Livonsaari, the overall organizational identification is only moderate. This can possibly be linked to self-centered motives of the individualists and to the tensions in within the workgroup dynamics.

Previous research on role identities proposes that individuals internalize particular identity traits, which are associated with specific roles a social setting (Grimes, 2018). A commander describes oneself “alpha-leader”, which corresponds with the way the Commanders integrate themselves as volunteers in Livonsaari, seeking to push forward their agenda. Due to the connection with the workgroup target, this individualistic behavior seems to affect the overall identification dynamics, for the Commanders themselves as well as for other individuals.

Last, for the Caregivers, we identified the workgroup as core identification target (please refer to *Figure 16*), through which they seek stability and **personalized belongingness**. This pattern appears to struggle the most in satisfying their motives, which is visible in the declining identification process throughout the program. For the volunteers with relationist tendencies, **personalized belongingness** is the strongest driver of identification. It seems to

be problematic when the workgroup reality does not coherently correspond with organizational reality. We draw from this finding, that the overall organizational setting plays a crucial role in the identification process for volunteers.



*Figure 16 - The Core Identification of the Caregivers*

Furthermore, this pattern sheds light into the role of workgroup dynamics in a temporal setting. For individuals that hold the workgroup as core identification, they are more dependent on the well-being of the workgroup than individuals with a different core identification. The Commanders, for example, are affected by the workgroup dynamics, however, with the primary motivation for **self-realization** and accessing new resources, they are still able to fulfill their desires through the individual target.

In summary, our research provides theoretical insights in the identification dynamics of volunteers in a temporal setting. We suggest that the core identification of a volunteer plays an important role for the overall identification process. Furthermore our findings imply that the workgroup is an integral driver for fulfilling motives and thus strongly influence the identification process in a temporal setting. Following on that insight, we found that the organizational setting shapes the identification process of volunteers by providing an overarching set of values and behavioral patterns within which the individual and workgroup dynamics interplay.

Those theoretical insights derived from the findings section lead directly towards the implication for the research of Ashforth et al. (2011) and Cooper & Thatcher (2010), which will be discussed in the following paragraphs.

## **8.2. Revisiting the Work of Ashforth et al. (2011)**

The work of Ashforth et al. (2011) on the dynamics of nested identities presents one crucial part of the theoretical background of this study. In the following section, we demonstrate what our research findings imply for the concept of nested identification processes and how it contributes to the work of Ashforth et al. (2011).

Ashforth et al. (2011) state that higher-order and lower-order identification targets are reciprocally linked, constantly challenging and reinforcing each other, resulting in stability over time. After examining our findings through the cross-pattern analysis, we found that the suggestions of Ashforth et al. (2011) are only partly confirmed by our findings, which can be linked to the temporal nature of the program. The timely limited period of seven months seems to hinder volunteers to create a feeling of stability. To quote an example, despite a strong individual identification, the overall process decreases over time (see Commanding pattern) and does not cascade positively to other targets. To add to the cascading effect of neighboring targets, we found that struggles with the workgroup have the ability to hinder or negatively affect the overall identification process. When we refer back to *Figure 15*, this behavior can be considered a reverse cascading effect.

To add to the effects of temporality for nested identification processes, it appears that in a timely limited program, the power dynamics shift how nested identities form and develop over time. The temporality of the program seems to bind volunteers to the workgroup. Our findings suggest that workgroup has a strong influencing potential on bordering targets, whether they are the core identification or not. This corresponds with the previously mentioned reverse cascading effect, where the negative dynamics of the workgroup spill over the identification with the individual and the organizational target by the end of the program.

The Dutiful pattern supports the cascading effect described by Ashforth et al. (2011) and remains the only one of the three patterns to enhance the overall identification towards the end of the program. As our findings attribute this development to the continuously strong identification with the community, it seems just to say that it is challenging to instantly

identify with the organizational target in only seven months. While we would like to highlight the role of establishing generic subjective and its positive effects for the overall identification process, this behavior leads to sacrifices with other targets (see weak workgroup identification of Dutiful pattern in 1. and 2. Phase). This leads to the assumption that a period of seven months is too short for a nested identification dynamics to become isomorph.

### 8.3. Revisiting the Framework of Cooper & Thatcher (2010)

In their theoretical contribution, Cooper & Thatcher (2010) offer a conceptual framework to explore people's identification processes within an organizational context (please find an original version of the framework in *Appendix E*). Their work has been extremely valuable for the analytical procedure of this study and it helped to explain the identification dynamics among volunteers in Livonsaari. With our findings, we would like to contribute to the framework of Cooper & Thatcher (2010) as our study takes the factor of temporality in consideration and thus add a new perspective to the original framework. Below in *Figure 17*, we depicted how identification dynamics among volunteers in Livonsaari may differ when a program is timely limited.

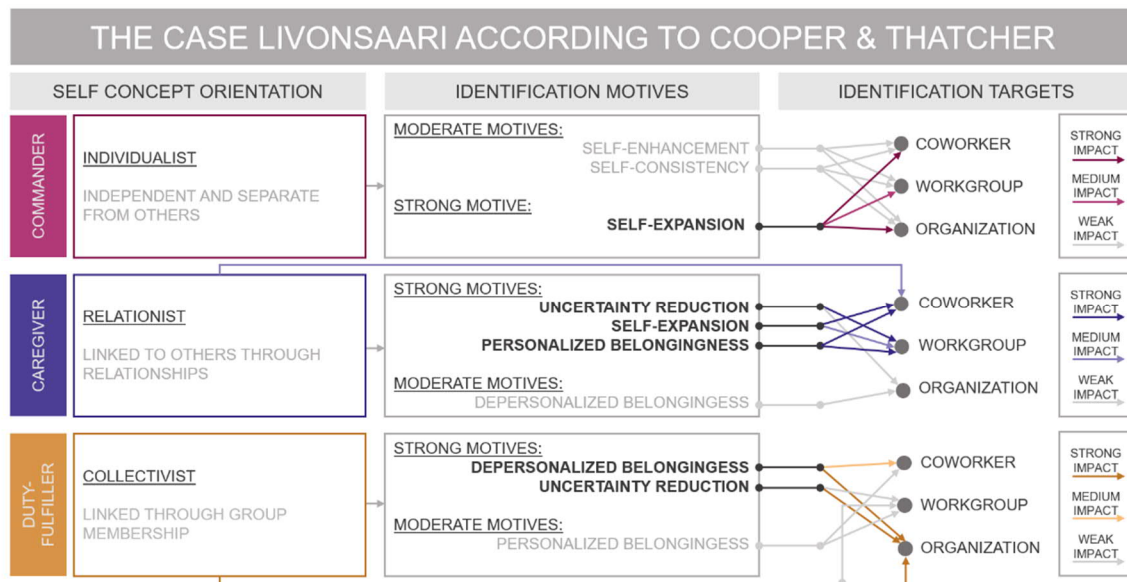


Figure 17 - Identification Dynamics of EVS according to the framework of Cooper & Thatcher (2010)

To add to the work of Cooper & Thatcher (2010), our research suggests that the identification with certain targets does not only depend on a person's self-concept orientation or the



respective motives. We found that the factor of temporality and the overall organizational setting play an integral part in the identification process of individuals. To quote an example, the Dutiful pattern displayed a strong identification with the organizational target to fulfill the desire for **depersonalized belongingness** and **uncertainty reduction**. While the organizational target remains core identification, over the course of the program, the Duty-Fulfiller enhances identification towards the workgroup and coworker targets.

Another example can be found in the dynamics of the Commanding pattern. Although the framework of Cooper & Thatcher (2010) suggests that there is no correlation between the motive of **self-expansion** and the identification with the organizational target, our findings give reason to suspect that as long as the organizational setting corresponds with the overall values and desires of a volunteer, the motive of **self-expansion** can foster the identification with organizational target. Additionally, our findings suggest that for individuals with relationist tendencies, the organizational target does not seem to have the ability to create a feeling of stability over a period of seven months when the overall organization displays rather individualistic features.

Furthermore, our study highlights the importance of the interplay of different targets as well as external factors that may strengthen identification with a certain target and hinder identification with another. An example for that can be found in the dynamics of the EVS group. While in the beginning of the program, the workgroup target serves as source of relatedness and stability, rising tensions among the EVS lead to a decrease in identification with the workgroup.

In summary, our findings imply that the role of temporality shifts the power dynamics within identification processes that are described in the framework of Cooper & Thatcher (2010). In a temporal setting, the workgroup becomes an important identification driver even for individuals that do not hold the workgroup as core identification. Regarding the overall setting of the organization, it seems to determine how individuals are able to fulfill their motives, which makes the organizational target either an enabler or a withholder.

#### **8.4. Volunteer Engagement in Community Enterprises**

Garner & Garner (2011) suggest that volunteer motivation is an important factor for the sustainability of nonprofit organizations and at the same time advise that those organizations should be more intentional about ensuring that volunteers feel supported in the

organizational environment. This seems to be valid for the CBE Livonsaari, where volunteers are vital for the upkeep of the community garden and for various entrepreneurial activities of its members.

Based on our findings, we provide implications on how community enterprises can be more intentional about volunteer engagement. One step in this direction is to better understand the nested identification dynamics of the volunteers, which we have elaborated through this study. In the following section, we aim first, to summarize how our theoretical insights support volunteer engagement and second, to translate how the theoretical insights can be applied in practice.

Through our study, we found that external factors seem to stimulate the identification process of volunteers. Those factors vary in their effect on those processes and can be considered an important insight for community enterprises to engage with volunteers. The factors that we found during our research can be divided into two major categories: (1) single events and interactions and (2) tensions and conflicts.

Jansen & Shipp (2018) state that “[...] *a single event can even introduce such clear misfit*” that individuals question their personal fit within an organization, now and in the future. Especially since the time in Livonsaari is limited for the volunteers, the magnitude of single events and interactions is an important factor for the identification process. While the effect of single events and interaction appears to be particularly strong in the beginning of the program, over time those factors seem to become less significant.

Besides special events, interactions with people play a role in the identification process of the volunteers. During the narratives, the interviewees recall single moments as sources of inspiration and learning, which occur during a collective excursion to Rumo. Please find a detailed description of how this trip exemplifies the variety of influencing potential for the volunteers in *Appendix F*.

Ashforth et al. (2011) state that during the establishment of collective identities, they strengthen their unique features of this identity (e.g. they establish core and distinction from other collective identities). During this process, they reinforce their own identity as well as the identity of people around them. These findings of Ashforth et al. (2011) might be a possible explanation for decreasing influence of events over the seven months. As the program proceeds, the individual core identifications (e.g. individual, workgroup or

organization) become more distinct and may display more incompatibility between each other as the core features become stronger.

In their study about temporal fit, Jansen & Shipp (2018) present how individuals think about and respond to fit (or misfit) over time. The authors explain that an accumulation of misfit-inducing events, comparisons or interactions over time leads to either renewed fit or hitting a threshold. Jansen & Shipp (2018) point out that besides an intolerable degree of misfit a specific moment, there is also a temporal range of tolerance. Within this range, individuals can tolerate particular instances over a certain period of time until the tolerance threshold is reached (Jansen & Shipp, 2018). Inspired by the findings of Jansen & Shipp (2018), the following excerpt addresses the question what external factors influence the identification process during a timely limited program and how those factors are distinct in their effect on the identification process of the volunteers.

Jansen & Shipp (2018) state that people tend to be attracted to, selected by and stay in organizations, where they feel similar to others. Over time, this process results in homogeneity within the organization (see Attraction-Selection-Attrition framework by Schneider (1987)). While the EVS chose a program based on their personal interest (e.g. learning about alternative lifestyles, new skills etc.), there still remains a high degree of unpredictability in the compatibility of participants during the EVS program. While in the beginning of the program, Commanders and Caregivers see the EVS experience through rose-colored glasses, the reality kicks in as soon as the novelty aspect disappears and a routine is created.

As described in the findings, the initial conflict with the EVS group and EVS #3 seemed to bind the other four volunteers. As this conflict was resolved over time, tensions arose among the rest of volunteers. A possible explanation for the initial consolidation of the four EVS as a result of the tensions with #3 is provided by Grimes (2018). The author argues that when specific social conditions threaten the identities of individuals within a given setting (Petriglieri, 2011), a process of identity work is sparked, which allows individuals to process those violations (Grimes, 2018). It seems that the initial conflict with one volunteer sped up the connectedness between the other four volunteers as a response to an identity threat. As the program proceeds, the collective workgroup identification experiences tensions from balancing conflicting motives and interests of individual volunteers. The constant presence

of either passive or active tensions throughout the program seems to negatively affect the identification process.

Besides the underlying tensions, the lack of tension management speaks for the encroachment of the process. A volunteer explains that a clear communication in regards to conflicts was missing from the EVS coordinators and expresses that even after several problematic instances “*no one put their foot down*”.

In summary, it appears that in a temporal setting, single events and interactions have the ability to affect the identification process at a specific point in time, which is particularly strong in the beginning of a timely limited program. Our findings suggest that this overall effect shapes the dynamics particularly in the short-run. In contrast to single events and interactions, tensions and conflicts seem to be more intertwined in the everyday life of being a volunteer in Livonsaari. While single events appear to have a more powerful effect on the identification process in the beginning of a temporal program, tensions seem to accumulate negative sentiments over time. Especially when those tensions remain unsolved, they have a powerful influencing potential on the dynamics towards the end of a timely limited program.

As formerly discussed, community enterprises have a reciprocal relationships with volunteers. This relationship requires a certain awareness to maintain it mutually beneficial. Our study provides a number of insights that can help CBEs to better understand identification processes of volunteers. In a temporal program, the workgroup becomes a central part of the volunteer experience. As the program is limited to seven months, community members do not expect the volunteers to stay after the program ends and thus intentionally or unintentionally label the volunteers as community outsiders. Furthermore, community enterprises need to be aware that the organizational setting and individual motives might be conflicting. Even if the organization is not directly affected by those conflicting values, unfulfilled motives of individuals can harm the overall identification dynamics of volunteers. A result of this process could be a less engaged volunteer group.

Another point that CBEs should be aware of is that volunteers possibly experience a culture shock or require an adjustment period within the new setting. This can be linked directly to the cultural setting or related to a discrepancy between expectations and reality. Thus, after arriving in a new environment, volunteers invest time in finding their place in this new social

environments. This identity work process involves making sense of new place and is energy consuming.

Resulting from those theoretical insights, we suggest the following practical approaches to engage more intentionally with volunteers. First, let us evaluate the role of external factors on the identification process. While single events and interactions serve as spark of inspiration for a short period, the accumulation of tensions over time impinges on the overall identification process of volunteers. This effect is particularly dominant as the limited time decreases motivation to solve conflicts. Instead the volunteers display avoidance of certain people or ignorance towards the end of the time in the community. As community and volunteers are reciprocally connected, the community should consider to take over an active mediator role as soon as tensions arise in the workgroup dynamics.

Second, our findings suggest that the identification with the organizational target requires a certain “adjustment-period”. Only one out of five EVS experienced the organizational as core identity and kept it up throughout the program. The organizational identification of volunteers also depends on the overall “culture” of the setting (e.g. what rules and values are present? How often do community members interact with each other? How are the volunteers integrated in the organizational setting? etc.). Particularly when the organization is loosely framed without an instant integration system for volunteers, the nature of a temporal program labels volunteers as community outsiders. Thus, organizations could pay a special focus on the well-being of workgroup dynamics to keep volunteers engaged in the community work.

This leads to the third suggestion which deals with implications for workgroup dynamics. As we learned, in a temporal setting the workgroup dependency strongly influences how individuals identify with the overall organization. The connection to the workgroup could be addressed more intentional from the start of the program. It seems that regardless of the organizational structure, volunteers seem to require a certain frame or system, which facilitates them to find their place in a new environment. The desire for **uncertainty reduction** plays a major role for the identification process of three out of five volunteers in Livonsaari. Especially in a timely limited program, it seems to be advantageous when volunteers know what role they play during their experience in a community instead of investing energy in this identity work process.

One practical tool to create structure is to make use of events and interactions for the identification process. Events can be focused either only on the volunteer group or include the community members as well. A prerequisite for an effective structure is that those events are incorporated in the entire volunteer program and do not remain a single incident. Regular events emphasize the belongingness of volunteers to the workgroup and facilitate finding their place in a new social environment, which in turn creates a feeling of stability.

Regarding the implementation of intentionally engaging with volunteers, it is important that the measures correspond with the needs of both, community and volunteers. Furthermore, the framework should be in line with the overall setting and not become entirely artificial. In other words, the community should not change their social structure to incorporate volunteers, but rather be more intentional about expectations towards volunteers and how the community wishes to integrate them as part of their communal structures.

To sum it up, our findings support the suggestion of Soviana (2014) who states that organizational architecture of CBEs should move towards a systems view that includes internal structures as well as the influence of outsiders instead of simply focusing solely on the community, its members and their benefits. Due to the high degree of diversity among existing CBEs, the author suggests tailoring and shaping the partnerships between communities and their influencing forces to the specific situation in accordance with the respective needs (Soviana, 2014). As Garner & Garner (2011) explain, volunteers and community members have a mutually beneficial relationship. After examining and discussing our findings, we encourage CBEs and other nonprofit organizations to actively engage volunteers to positively influence their identification process and keep their motivation high throughout a temporal program.

## **9. LIMITATIONS AND FUTURE WORK**

After providing an overview of what our findings imply for other research fields, it is important to examine the limitations of this study. In the following section, we discuss the constraints of the theoretical insights derived from our research and put our implications into perspective. The limitations that we would like to address can be grouped in two categories, limitation of the case and personal limitations.

The study intentionally focused on an intensive single case to create a rich and thick description, not only for the identification dynamics of the volunteers, but also for social interactions of one particular community enterprise. While the analytical process allowed us to derive with generalizable theoretical insights, we must acknowledge that the case setting within the community and its five volunteers is unique. Let us dive into the factors that make this setting so unique.

First, the timeframe of the program is limited to seven months and our insights have been derived from the identification dynamics within this particular timeframe. We were able to dissect the seven months into three phases (four phases including preparation phase), which were tailored based on the narratives of the volunteers during the 1. Step of the data analysis process. The particular timeframe leads to the question whether the volunteer identification dynamics shift depending on the length of the program. One particularly interesting topic for future research is whether the importance of the workgroup amplifies or decreases depending on the length of a volunteer program.

Second, we observed five volunteers throughout their EVS program in Livonsaari, which we base our findings on. It is possible that the identification dynamics of volunteers change depending on the number of people in a volunteer group. Therefore, we suggest to further research on the influence of group size for temporal nested identification processes.

Last, we found that the setting of the community plays an integral role for the identification process of volunteers. Particularly, for individuals with relationist tendencies it seemed challenging to identify with the organizational setting. Based on the unique organizational and social environment of the CBE Livonsaari, we find it worth investigating how the organizational setting shapes dynamics in other CBEs and confirm or rebut our findings for the case in Livonsaari.

As this study constitutes of a constructionist research philosophy, it takes into consideration that I as researcher am closely linked to the knowledge production process. While I assured that my data was regularly reflected through in situ recordings, reflection papers and discussion with my research team, the findings of this research are closely linked to my personal experiences and thus possible biases cannot be entirely avoided.

In regards to personal limitations, it should be stated that I am a non-Finnish citizen with only limited local language capabilities. Although my status as foreigner opened several

doors for me during my stay in Livonsaari and allowed me to ask questions from a cultural perspective, my lacking Finnish skills made it difficult to access all community members, as not all felt comfortable to communicate in English. Also, I perceived that my foreign background labeled me as part of the EVS group instead of being a researcher in the community.

## **10. CONCLUDING REMARKS**

The main purpose this study is to offer a better understanding of the dynamics of identification processes and it attempts to propose factors that help explaining the process. Garner & Garner (2011) describe that the overall voluntary experience can be perceived as valuable and satisfactory while certain incidents of this experience have caused conflicts with personal expectations or value system. This description reflects the complex identification dynamics within a temporal setting. Through this research we have shed light on the identification process of volunteers in a community-based enterprise, which brings us to the end of this research paper. Let us briefly review our key theoretical insights on temporal nested identification processes in community enterprises.

First, in regards to insights for the dynamics of nested identities, we found that there seems to be a correlation between the identification process and the overall “culture” of a specific setting (in this case, the social dynamics and physical set up of the CBE Livonsaari). For the identification dynamics this translates to a positive effect when the overall setting of an organization and individual motives are in line (supported by Commanding and Dutiful patterns). Conversely, the identification process appears to be negatively affected when the setting does not enable the individuals to pursue their motives (refer to the Caregiving pattern: motives of personalized relatedness in depersonalized setting seems not possible).

Second, we investigated the role of temporality for the identification process. The factor of temporality labels the EVS as a temporal collective within a larger setting. With a program duration of seven months, the volunteers seem to be bound to the workgroup (whether self-assigned or unintentionally). Accordingly, our findings suggest that in a temporal setting, workgroup identification is highly influential on overall identification process. It seems that only through the immediate uptake and acceptance of the organizational culture and a strong



continuous organizational identification, the workgroup dependency on the workgroup can be avoided. In summary, it is reasonable to state that the workgroup target plays a fundamental role in the identification process of the volunteers (see Commanders and Caregivers). Following that argument, our findings suggest that a continuously strong identification with the organizational target appears to have a positive effect on other targets (see Duty-Fulfiller). However, as this instantaneous identification is only visible with one out of five volunteers, the workgroup target appears to have a more influential power to shape the identification dynamics.

As last key insights, we discovered how external factors alter the identification dynamics. In a temporal setting, single events and interactions have the ability to affect the process at a specific point in time. Furthermore, tensions management or mismanagement plays a powerful part in the overall dynamics. Interestingly, different external factors vary in their impact depending on their point of occurrence within a temporal setting. The effect of events and specific interactions appear to be particularly strong in the beginning of a timely limited program, while continuous mismanagement of conflicting situation impinges on the identification dynamics especially towards the end of the program.

Furthermore, our findings suggest that events and interaction create single, short-term peaks in the identification towards a specific target. Unless events and interactions fundamentally shape and structure routines of the temporal experience, they do not appear to have a lasting effect on the identification dynamics. On the contrary, if not managed properly, tensions and conflicts seem to be intertwined in the everyday routines. Additionally, tensions seem to accumulate negative sentiments over time. Especially when those tensions remain unsolved, they have a powerful influencing potential on the identification dynamics towards the end of a timely limited program.

This study contributes to the research of Ashforth et al. (2011) on nested identities and Cooper & Thatcher (2010) work on organizational identification. Our research presents only a glimpse into temporal nested identification dynamics within community enterprises. Hence, for the future, based on the theoretical insights of this study, we suggest further research on the topic of community enterprises and their underappreciated role in the debate of sustainable development.

As final remark, I would like to refer back to the experience of being a volunteer in Livonsaari. The benefits of the European Voluntary Service states that through its intercultural dimension, the program offers “*a unique opportunity to come into contact with cultures different from your own and to acquire new skills and abilities useful for your personal and professional growth*” (European Commission, n.d.). Whether they were ready to go back home or intended to stay in the community, I have no doubt that this experience was a one of a lifetime experience each one of the five volunteers.

*“I feel, that community is for support, everyone involved. I already now know that I’m going to miss this very much however loose it was.” (#1)*

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## IV. APPENDIX

### A. Photo Collages of my Six Visits in Livonsaari



*Image 6 - Collage of my 1. Livonsaari Visit*





*Image 7 - Collage of my 2. Livonsaari Visit*





*Image 8 - Collage of my 3. Livonsaari Visit*

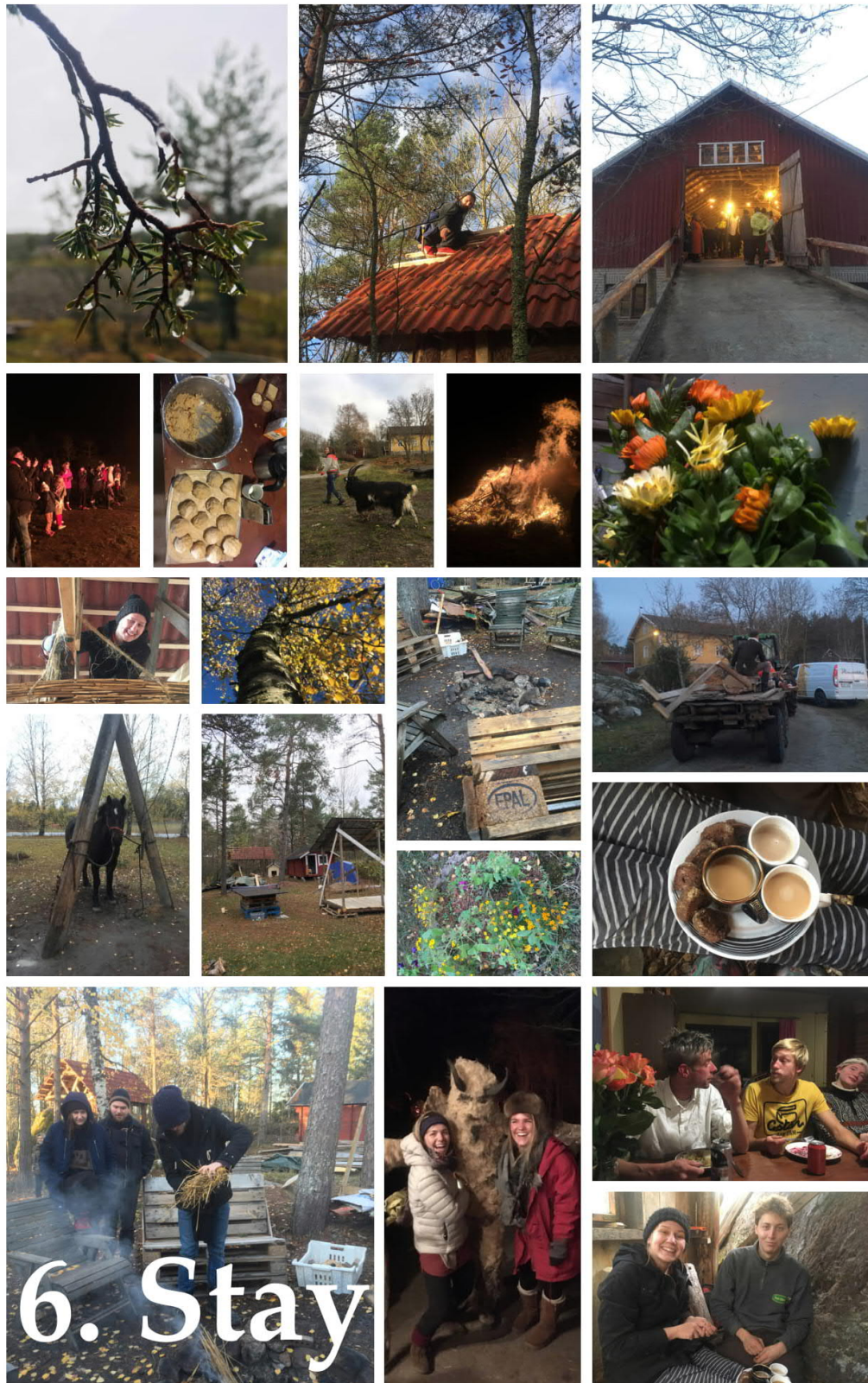




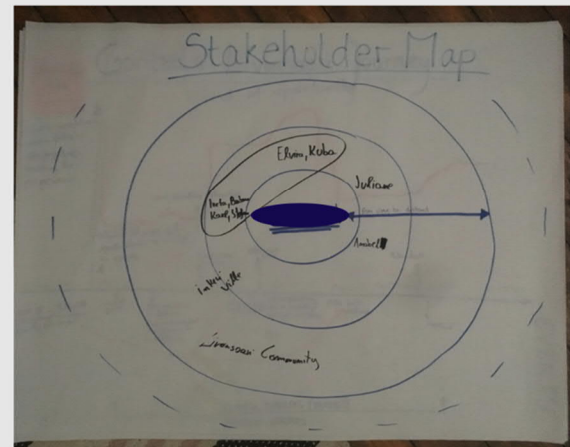
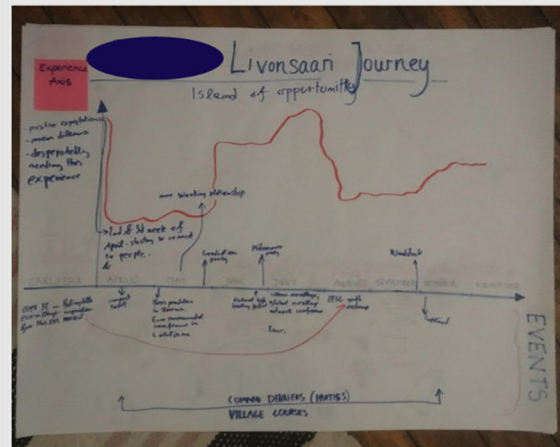




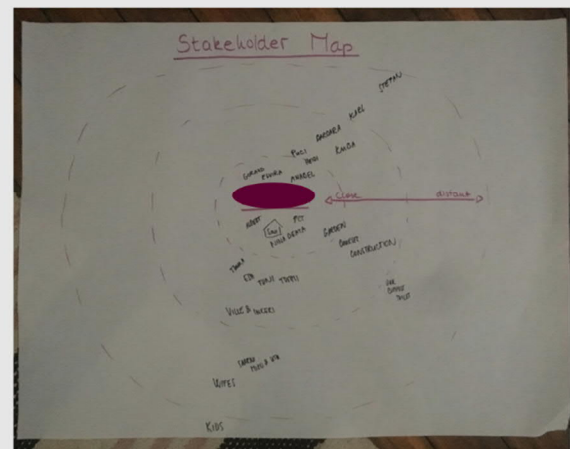
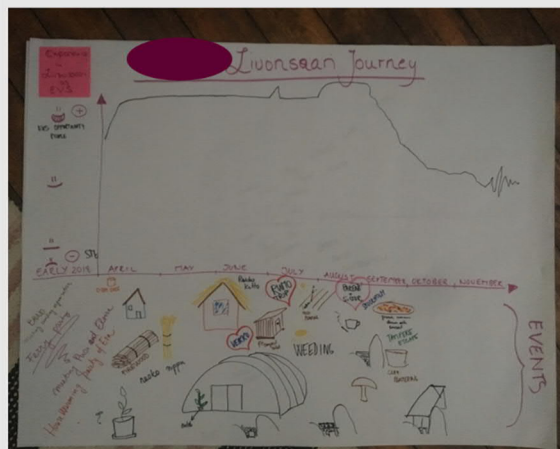


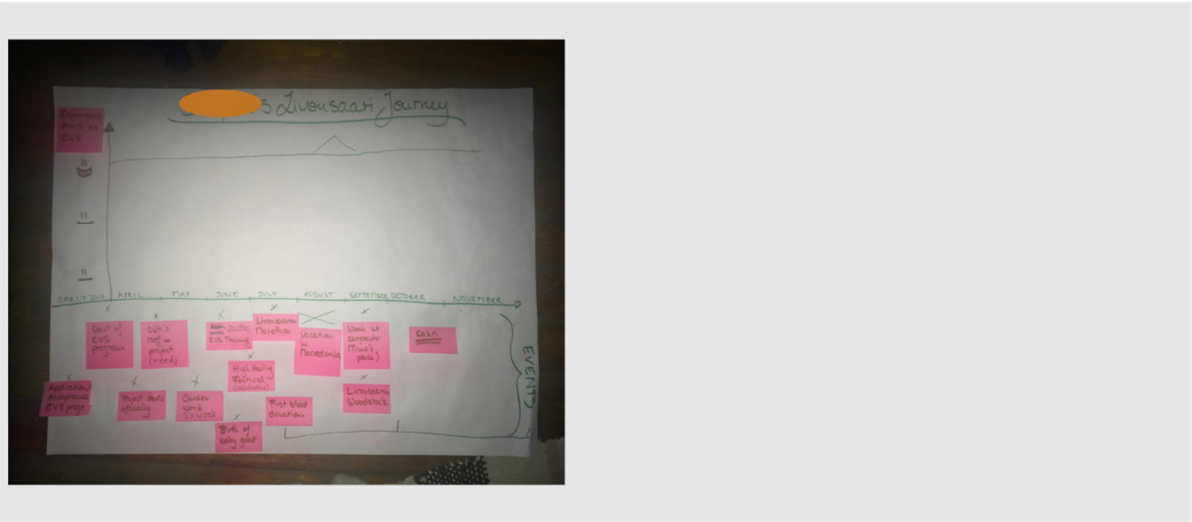


*Image 11 - Collage of my 6. Livonsaari Visit*

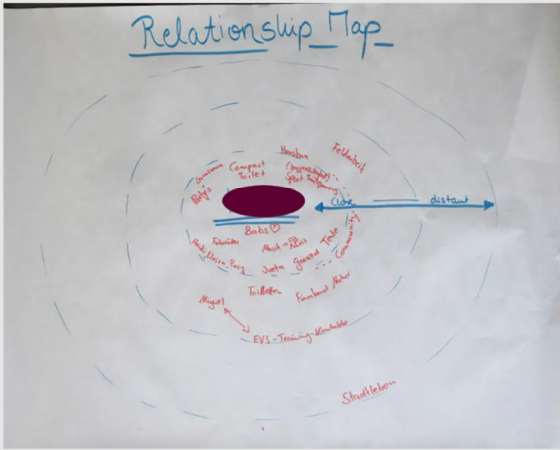
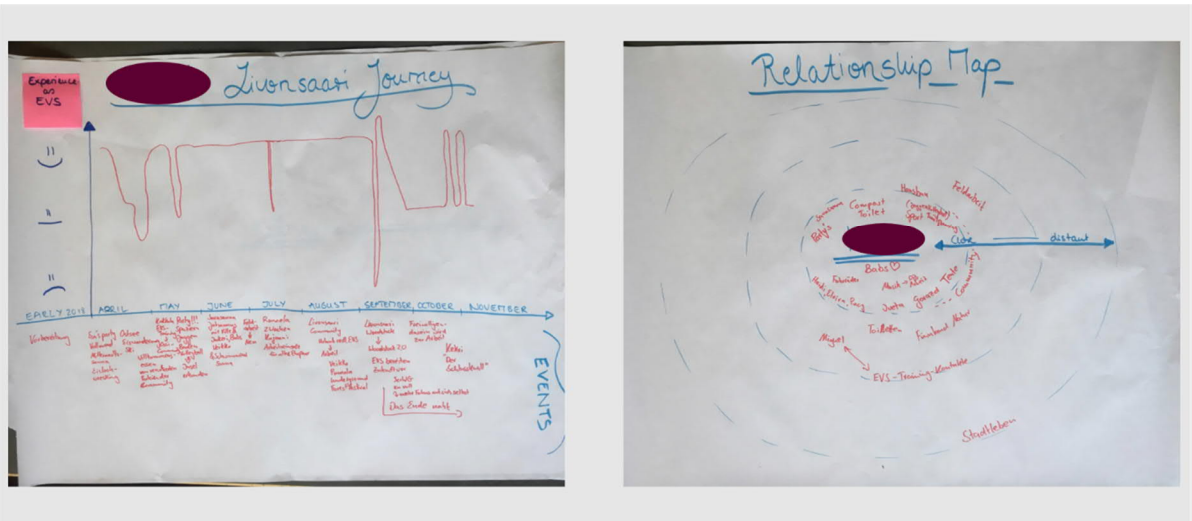


## WORKSHOP RESULTS – VOLUNTEER #2





## WORKSHOP RESULTS – VOLUNTEER #4







		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Degree of autonomy</li> <li>No expectation of previous knowledge / skills</li> <li>Learning</li> <li>New experiences</li> <li>Inspiration</li> <li>Personal interest in gardening</li> <li>Meeting individual community members through work</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Discover common interests</li> <li>Perception of time</li> <li>Work <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>How do different people in the community work</li> <li>Garden work</li> <li>Construction</li> <li>Understanding of work dynamics</li> </ul> </li> <li>EVS duties</li> <li>Finnish courses</li> <li>Understanding different roles of people in the community</li> <li>Visible progress in gardening results → results</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting to know each other</li> <li>Community as source of inspiration</li> <li>Ice Skiing Tour (personal interests)</li> <li>Expectation management</li> <li>EVS duties / agreements</li> <li>Work</li> <li>Finnish courses</li> <li>Results of the work</li> <li>Common dinners</li> </ul>
1. PHASE	EVS #3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Culture Shock</li> <li>Novelty</li> <li>Difficulty to adjust</li> <li>Helping people in the community</li> <li>Birth of Iris</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pekka's Housewarming Party</li> <li>Ice Skiing</li> <li>Bureaucracy</li> <li>Work: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Garden</li> <li>Construction</li> </ul> </li> <li>Kokola Trip</li> <li>Meeting other EVS</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pekka's Housewarming Party</li> <li>Ice Skiing</li> <li>Work in the garden</li> <li>EVS as community support</li> <li>Birth of Iris</li> </ul>
1. PHASE	EVS #4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Free time</li> <li>Getting to know Livonsaari</li> <li>Parties [in Alitalo]</li> <li>EVS Group</li> <li>Tensions</li> <li>Kokola Trip</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pekka's Housewarming Party</li> <li>Getting to know Livonsaari</li> <li>Work /volunteer work</li> <li>Getting to know the people [community members]</li> <li>Kokola Trip</li> <li>Eco-Village Visit</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Pekka's Housewarming Party</li> <li>Parties [in Alitalo]</li> </ul>
1. PHASE	EVS #5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First Impression [ice skiing]</li> <li>Village tour [personal experience]</li> <li>EVS #2's birthday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Enjoyment</li> <li>Surprise</li> </ul> </li> <li>Parties</li> <li>Getting to know Livonsaari</li> <li>Free time</li> <li>Kokola trip: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Personal view, surprise</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Eventful</li> <li>Paperwork</li> <li>Village Tour as EVS Group</li> <li>EVS #2's Birthday <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Spontaneity</li> <li>Fun</li> <li>Family</li> <li>Shared living</li> </ul> </li> <li>EVS include EVS #3</li> <li>Getting to know Livonsaari</li> <li>Work</li> <li>Work meetings <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Dynamics</li> <li>Involvement of community</li> </ul> </li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Getting to know each other</li> <li>Work dynamics (meetings)</li> <li>Free time</li> <li></li> </ul>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Process of the meetings</li> <li>• Kokola Trip</li> <li>• Free time</li> </ul>	
Sense-making: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Individua Levell: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Importance of free time (driven by personal interests)</li> <li>○ Culture shock, gap between expectations and reality</li> <li>○ Two EVS expressed culture shocks, difficulties to adjust to a new environment</li> <li>○ Personal glimpse on dynamics of Livo (Jesse's family, "we are not an eco-village)</li> <li>○ adjustment to community and towards other EVS</li> <li>○ Getting to know people</li> <li>○ Feeling of freedom / autonomy</li> <li>○ Everyone is grateful for new learing experiences, community seems perfect to develop new skills and knowledge</li> <li>○ Mostly positive emotions, happiness about starting the program (except for EVS #1)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• EVS Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Work related narratives in this phase are almost exclusively told in the EVS perspective</li> <li>○ Graduation Party as turning point of EVS (mentioned only by two EVS)</li> <li>○ Work as novelty, not perceived as "exploitation"</li> <li>○ discover common interests, quick bonding to shared living "we are more than just roommates"</li> <li>○ Getting to know people</li> <li>○ Ice Skiing Tour → first interaction with community after party, EVS activity</li> <li>○ Kokola Trip (mentioned by all except EVS #1)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• Livo Level: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ EVS are perceived as novelty, initial excitement towards meeting the newcomers</li> <li>○ Work as a medium to meet community members</li> <li>○ Livo and its people as source of inspiration</li> <li>○ Getting to know people</li> <li>○ Pekka's Housewarming Party</li> <li>○ Everyone is grateful for new learning experiences, community seems perfect to develop new skills and knowledge</li> </ul> </li> </ul>				

## D. Example – Data Analysis Step 4.

EXAMPLE – ANALYSIS STEP 4.

	EVS #1			EVS #2			EVS #3			EVS #4			EVS #5		
	Individual	EVS	Livonsaari	Individual	EVS	Livonsaari	Individual	EVS	Livonsaari	Individual	EVS	Livonsaari	Individual	EVS	Livonsaari
Preparation	Strong	-	(Strong)	Strong	-	-	Medium	-	-	Strong	-	-	Strong	-	-
1. Phase	Medium	Strong	Weak/Medium	Strong	Strong	Strong	Medium	Weak	Strong	Strong	Medium	Medium	Strong	Strong	Medium
2. Phase	Strong	Medium	Weak	Strong	Medium	Medium	Medium	Weak	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Weak
3. Phase	Medium	Weak	Weak	Medium	Weak	Medium	Strong	Medium	Strong	Medium	Weak	Medium	Medium	Medium	Weak
Continuum	Medium	Strong	Weak	Strong	Medium	Medium	Strong	Medium	Strong	Strong	Medium	Medium	Strong	Medium	Medium

	Individual					EVS Group					Livonsaari						
	EVS #1	EVS #2	EVS #3	EVS #4	EVS #5	Preparation	EVS #1	EVS #2	EVS #3	EVS #4	EVS #5	Preparation	EVS #1	EVS #2	EVS #3	EVS #4	EVS #5
Preparation	Strong	Strong	Medium	Strong	Strong	-	-	-	-	-	-	(Strong)	-	-	-	-	-
1. Phase	Medium	Strong	Medium	Strong	Strong	1. Phase	Strong	Strong	Weak	Medium	Strong	1. Phase	Weak/Medium	Strong	Strong	Medium	Medium
2. Phase	Strong	Strong	Medium	Strong	Strong	2. Phase	Medium	Medium	Weak	Strong	Strong	2. Phase	Weak	Medium	Strong	Strong	Weak
3. Phase	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	3. Phase	Weak	Weak	Medium	Weak	Medium	3. Phase	Weak	Medium	Strong	Medium	Weak
Continuum	Medium	Strong	Strong	Strong	Strong	Continuum	Strong	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Continuum	Weak	Medium	Strong	Medium	Medium

Figure 18 – Example of Analysis Step 4. Overview Identification Assessment

## OVERVIEW – INDIVIDUAL IDENTIFICATION

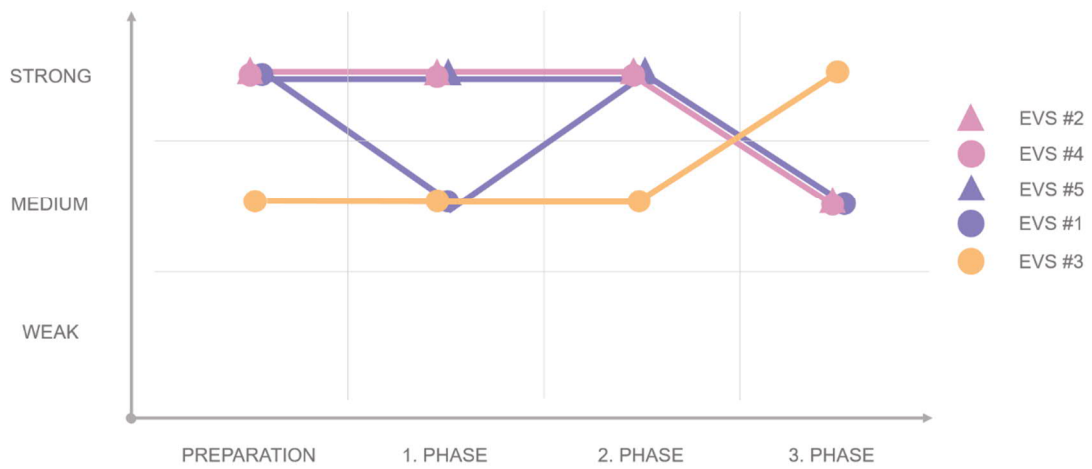


Figure 19 - Individual Identificaiton Paths

## OVERVIEW – EVS GROUP IDENTIFICATION

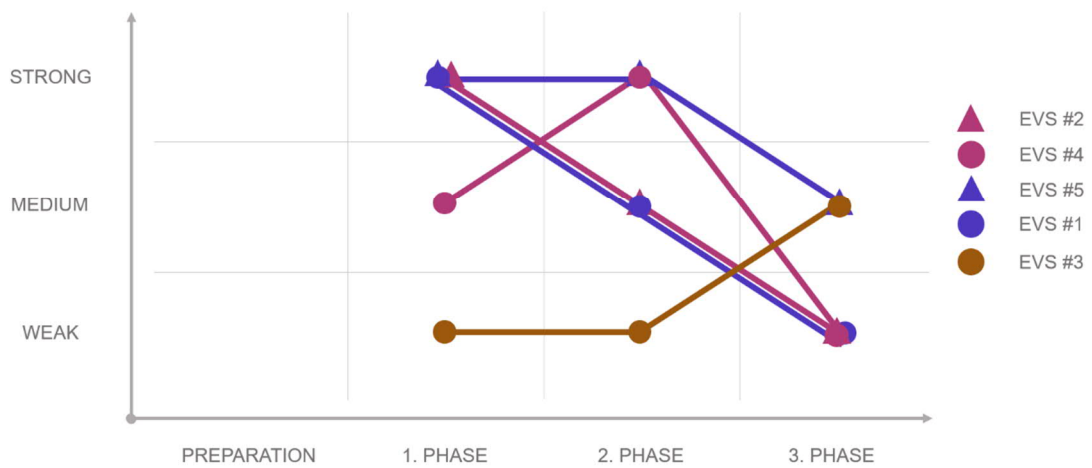


Figure 20 - EVS Group Identification Paths

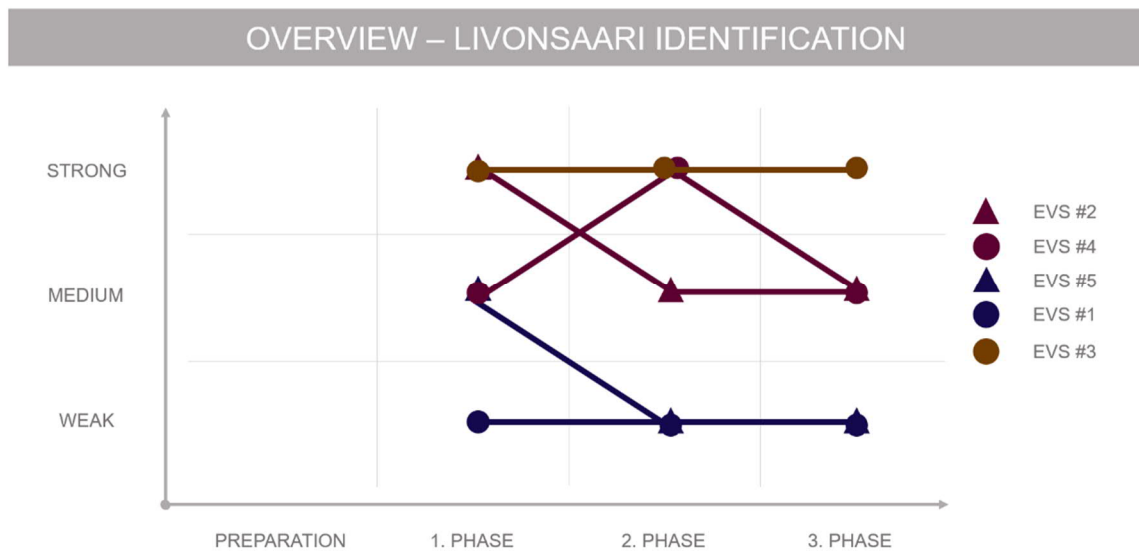


Figure 21 - Livonsaari Identification Paths

## E. The Original Framework of Cooper & Thatcher (2010)

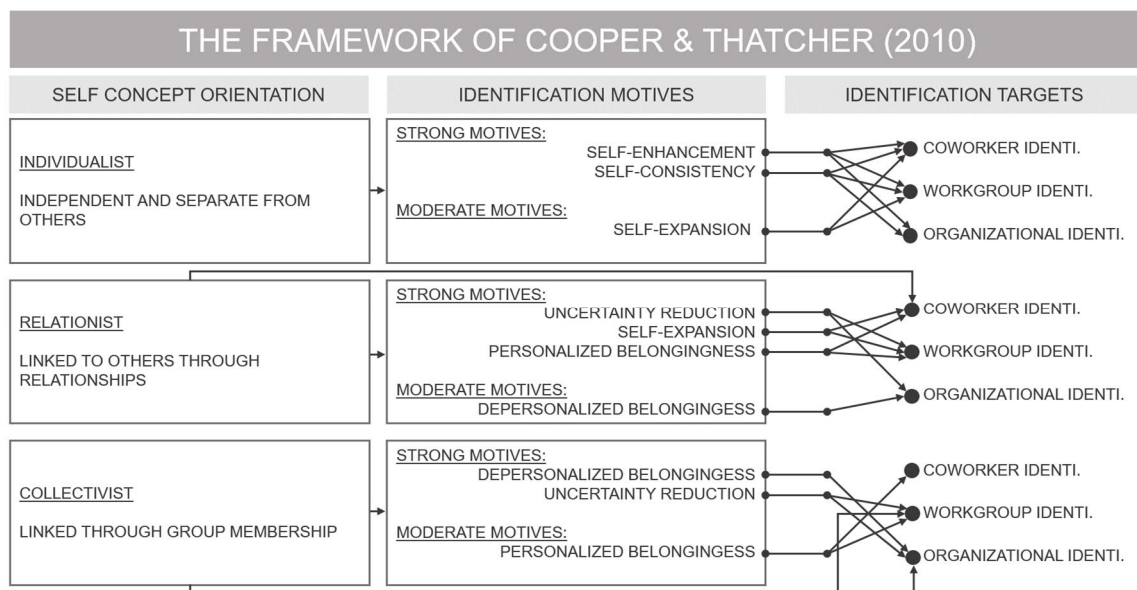


Figure 22 - Original Framework of Cooper & Thatcher (2010): Connection between Self-Concept Orientations, Identification Motives and Identification with Organizational Targets

## F. Description of the Rumo Excursion as Driver for Identification

As part of the volunteer program, the EVS undertake a two-week excursion to Rumo, where a local community builds an educational center for sustainable living. The construction of the center is based on traditional crafting practices (no use of electricity). The workforce is

supported through regularly organized “talcots”, an event type that assembles people, who in return for their labor receive food and accommodation.

Particular the trip to Rumo presents an important driver, spurring identification on many levels and at the same time exemplifies the wide spectrum of how an event or interaction influences the identification dynamics.

On a personal level, EVS #1 gains inspiration through meaningful interaction with the founder of the projects. During the trip, #1 spoke with the initiator and describes that “*[the founder] took the time to explain what he’s doing, every morning talking to the volunteers, talking to me individually for a long time. He really made sure that everybody was clear on what was going on.*”

As the program proceeds, the novelty aspect of a life in Livonsaari decreases and initially exciting tasks turn into work. For #2, the trip to Rumo fosters identification as it stimulates appreciation for the multiple opportunities available in Livonsaari. #2 explains that “*we learn the same [things] here [in Livonsaari], like construction, wood, planting, weeding, caring about plants. That’s quite a nice comparison, that we get to even more appreciate this [EVS] program [with] lessons [that the instructor in Rumo] is making. It’s the same and we don’t need to pay to join this. [...] So, yes, Rumo was amazing*”. Similarly describes #5 the excursion as means to escape the established routine during the half-time of the program and explains that “*[the Rumo trip] was the first time in these 3,5 months that we went away from Livonsaari for longer. Before this, I was really looking forward to go because I felt that I need a break or some change, because you started to get used to all these things and you just work in there.*”

For EVS #4, the trip presents an opportunity to expand the perspectives of a life in Finland. Besides working on the construction site, the EVS explore nearby villages and visit a music festival on an island. Helping out an elderly couple close to Rumo, who in turn spoil the EVS with delicious food and smoke sauna, is one of the “magic moments” that EVS #4 recalls from the two weeks in Rumo.